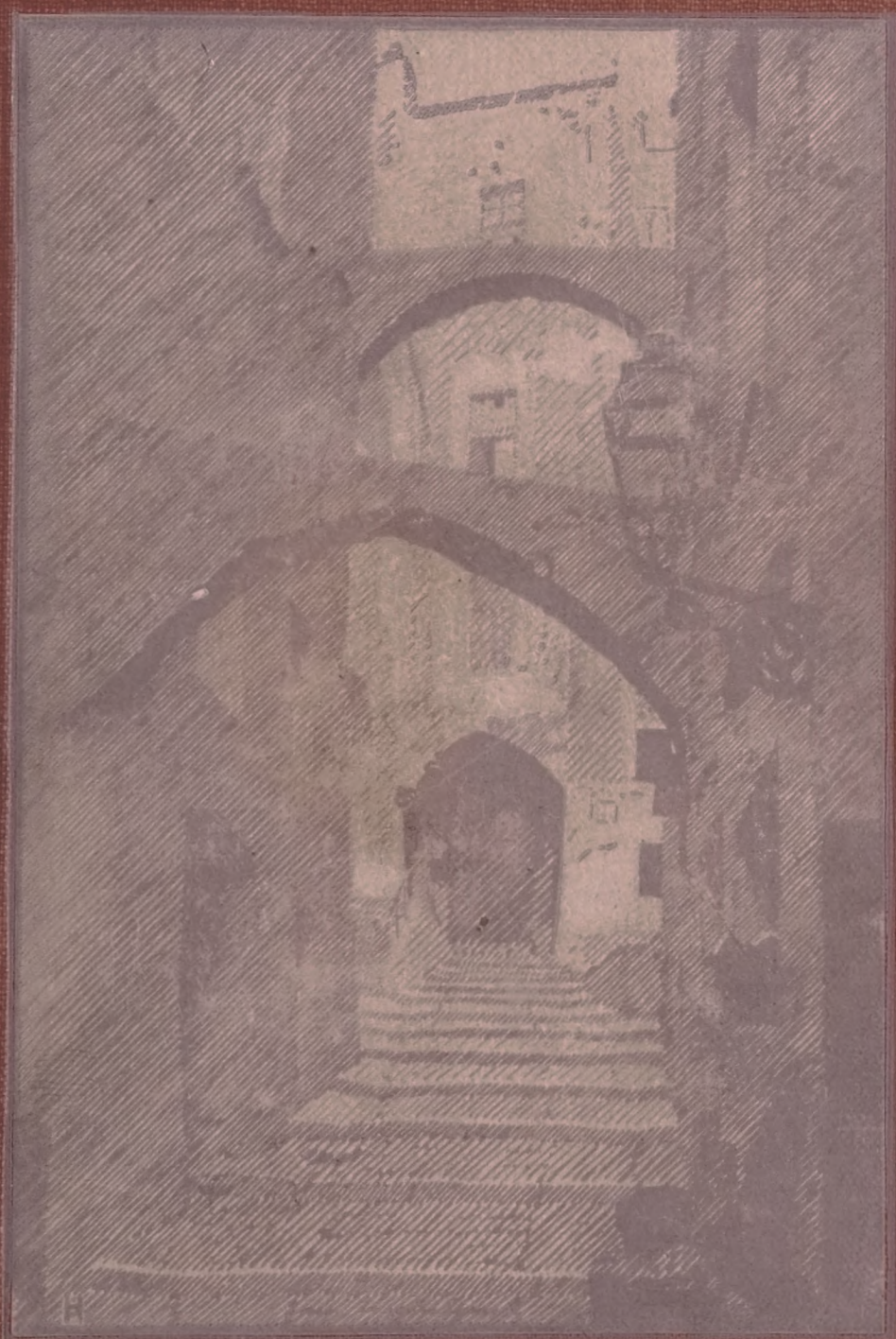
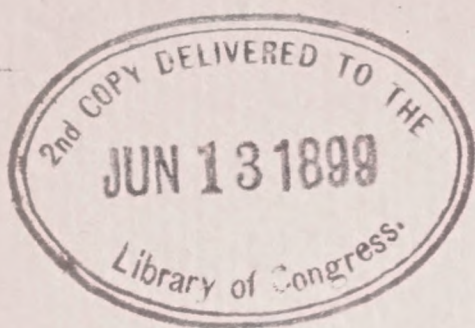


VENGEANCE OF THE FEMALE

by
MARRION WILCOX



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*The Vengeance of the
Female*



A STREET IN SAN REMO

Vengeance of the Female

EDITED BY

MARRION WILCOX

AUTHOR OF "A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WAR
WITH SPAIN"



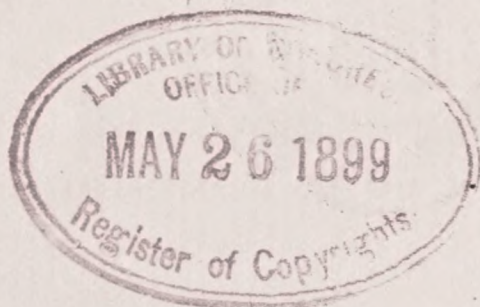
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Preface

For solemn nonsense, commend us to the truly great.

Last May, at the annual meeting of the Primrose League, Lord Salisbury gave utterance to a foreboding of what would happen to Spain and certain other countries. "These states," the English Premier observed, "are becoming weaker, and the strong states stronger"; and he pointed out that the "living nations" would gradually encroach upon the territory of the "dying states."

Quite recently one of the influential journals had this to say: "The attention of the world is being called, to-day as never before, to the plight of the nations which pass by the name of 'Latin,' as indicating peculiarities of temperament or character which differentiate them from the rest of mankind. If only one of the three leading Latin states—France, Spain, and Italy—were proving unfortunate, the matter would seem no more puzzling than the misfortunes of an individual man; but when you have the whole three apparently going to the dogs, while the rest of Christendom is flourishing, political philosophers are kept un-

PREFACE

usually busy speculating and analyzing about causes and consequences."

"Dying" and "going to the dogs"?

These people are children. The reason why they do not know how to govern themselves; why they care so much for love; why they are so cruel and blindly passionate when they hate?

They are children.

* * *

Some of the chapters of this book have appeared before, though not precisely in their present form, in *Harper's Magazine* and elsewhere. The publishers' permission to reprint these in their proper connection is gratefully acknowledged.

M. W.

New York, April 18, 1899.

Vignettes and Studies: Spanish-
American and Spanish

I

From New York to Seville

It will be easier for us to understand the distant Spaniard if we begin with a glimpse of Spanish-American life, don't you think so? And besides, we can tell about two of the people who were afterward of the household in Seville—about Vincent and Gloria. To be sure, that story about Vincent and Gloria has been told once already, but to very few persons. If you happen to remember, the question about their engagement was, How ever had Dr. Vincent managed to propose?

In the first place, how did he screw up his courage and call to his aid the requisite number of words? Dr. Vincent had met Gloria at Newport. He immediately fell in love with her, and she with him; but as they were both reticent people, it took them two years to make this known to one another. Still another year elapsed before their friends became aware of the inter-

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esting fact. Surely, no one would have guessed such a thing. Gloria was apparently the most indifferent person in the world—indifferent especially to attention from gentlemen. Her sisters looked at her in wonder.

In the second place, how did he get the chance? Surely, he must have said it in the presence of her two sisters, Isabelita and Teresa, of her mother and mamita (grandmother), and of her cousin, the musician, for these were never upon any occasion absent.

It must have been on one of those evenings when the three young men stole in by way of the balcony during the time of "Papa Turo's" (grandfather's) illness; when neither mother nor mamita could leave him for an instant, and Cousin Louis was away in Havana. It must have been then.

How different those three couples were!

First, Isabelita, the elder sister, crazy to see Manuel, waiting for him in fretful impatience, standing at the window, and with longing eyes looking up and down the dusky street, not only acknowledging to her sisters that she had made the appointment with him, but also wishing the entire neighbor-

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hood to appreciate her good fortune. Manuel, half Spanish, half American, thought this sort of thing fine fun, and really cared for Isabelita a little. When he arrived, Isabelita and he sat on the balcony—he being funny and Isabelita laughing and flirting immoderately and wishing that he would be more serious, in a certain way, and more personal.

Gloria, next in order of seniority, fanning herself as though she had no other object in life than to keep cool and dainty, said she expected no one, although inwardly assured of Dr. Vincent's approach. She waited just in front of the window under the chandelier, and when Dr. Vincent came he sat there also. Thus they both made sure that no person would even suspect them of wishing to talk of anything but the weather or mutual friends.

In the back corner of the parlor—the corner most comfortable, most becoming, and most convenient for flirtation—Teresa, or Baby, as she was called in the family, expected some new man from time to time. Well, she had great sleepy eyes and a figure like the queen of love's. That was her talent.

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It must have been on one of those evenings that Vincent said, "Will you?" and Gloria answered, "I will."

But that was the calm part of it, for great was the indignation and wrath of Señora Diaz—and even greater the wrath and indignation of the old, dark-skinned "mamá"—when it became known that Dr. Vincent had dared to propose to Gloria. Let this not be misunderstood. Dr. Vincent was an unobjectionable person, a young man who had inherited money and who knew how to employ leisure time without practicing medicine. The trouble was that he had found opportunity to speak to a Spanish maiden alone. Por Dios! What was the girl thinking of? How could she so forget herself? It seemed a shame and a family disgrace.

This is how the fact came out—it was Alfredo's doing.

Alfredo was the youngest member of the Diaz family, and spoiled by all. But then, he was a beautiful child, five or six years old, very fat, with dark skin and eyes like two coals, red cheeks and short black hair, the whitest teeth ever seen and cherry-red lips. He was an imp of naughtiness, never

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out of mischief. He spoke English in a very odd manner, translating directly from the Spanish, and using all the largest words he could pick up. His arms or legs were always in motion, especially when he was speaking. Then his hands had as much if not more to say than his mouth. He amused himself in various ways—for instance:

His mother, sitting in the back parlor with her sewing-basket in her lap; Fredo playing near. He would go to her, put his arm around her and say, "Dear, nice, pretty Mamma Tona!"—then throw her basket on the floor.

He would take the dust from the dustpan as soon as the servant had finished sweeping a room and sprinkle it over the floor. "Because," he said, "the girl had not enough work to do." Having heard his mother make this remark, he desired to arrange things so that she might earn her wages.

One day at dinner Alfredo began, "Ah, ha! mamita, and whom did we meet to-day in Broadway, eh?"

Gloria, whom he had accompanied, making signs for him to keep still, interposed,

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“Why, Fredo, we met lots of people; and don't you know the nice candy Gloria bought for you?”

“Oh, yes; but I have eaten it all up now—and Mr. What's-his-name, you know, Gloria, the one who walked with us!”

“Gloria,” cried the mother, sternly, “how does this happen? Who walked with you?”

“Why, mamma, I could not help it! We met Mr.—I mean Dr. Vincent, and—”

“You could not help it!” Señora Diaz interrupted. “Go to your room, and I will see you presently.” (Exit Gloria in tears.) “Now, Fredo, tell mamma what the gentleman said to sister.”

* * * *

However, Señora Diaz was forced to consent, as her husband was disposed to look with favor upon the match. So, after many tears had been shed by the female members of the Diaz family, Gloria was declared engaged to the doctor.

Then began a desire on his part to take his fiancée to the play, and, behold! she informed him that mamma, mamita, Isabelita and Baby must also go. And so they did—many times—until the poor doctor

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grew weary of wandering around with five ladies.

Dr. Vincent, as a well-to-do bachelor, was, in his own quiet way, self-respecting. He protested.

First of all, he appealed to the mother.

Señora Diaz had been married at the age of fifteen to her first cousin—a brute.

She was a very hard-working woman, especially interested, as Spanish housewives are, in the cooking, which is abominable—unless you happen to like it. She had three objects in life: First, to keep the furnace red-hot, and never to open door or window; second, to keep her daughters most strictly under Spanish rules, and thus guard against their tendency to become Americanized; third, to ward off disease from her family, which she understood to mean bundling with flannels and baking in the house as aforesaid. Dressed in deep mourning all her life, she had done her best to wear herself out; but have we not noticed that people do not wear themselves out in this manner? She was fat to grossness, had a rather flat nose, a wheedling voice and soft manners. She was kindness personified, but she was broken-spirited. You noticed

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that she showed a bit of temper when Alfredo exposed his sister's misconduct? Well, in the one matter of propriety, a Spanish mother retains her stiffness to the end.

While Dr. Vincent was waiting for Señora Diaz, he criticised the appearance of the house for the first time. When Gloria had been present, he had seen only her. Now he noticed dust and was apprehensive of garlic; now he objected to the furniture, which was very rich. In the long parlor the girls had evidently tried American touches—bows here and there, and bric-à-brac. These looked out of place. To his irritated sense some perverse and mischievous spirit whispered that it was not a model establishment; that when company was expected the litter of the ground floor would be thrown into a closet, and for a week afterward this closet would be searched for missing articles; that in the bedrooms were comfortable beds, mirrors large and low, but no prim little things; that on the bureau one would be sure to see a large saucer for powder, in it a piece of glove instead of a puff; on the table, high-heeled shoes, perhaps (and well placed, too, such pretty shoes!), while dainty underclothing

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would lie here and there; that the beds were used as lounges and catch-alls; that things for beautifying the person were to be found in tropical abundance and perplexing variety, but in no particular set place, for they who used them dressed all over the house, from one room to another; that Isabelita made the top drawer of her bureau, without lock or key, a place of concealment for Manuel's letters.

The doctor's interview with Señora Diaz was brief. He stated his position, and she referred him to mamita. She was ruled by her in everything, she said.

The mamita was fatter, more positive, and, of course, fifteen or twenty years older than Señora Diaz. Those were the only apparent points of difference. She was filled with Cuban notions about bringing up children. She thought the Americans an ill-behaved nation; and, knowing none of them herself, desired that her family should be equally exclusive.

In her manner with the doctor, the mamita was like a child. She had her own cause of complaint, of long standing. She scarcely waited for him to conclude the statement of his grievance before she began.

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Was it credible? Yes, it was a fact. Her granddaughters wanted to become American! In cut and fit their dresses accorded with the American fashion; but, she admitted, they could not help wearing bright colors, especially red and yellow, and putting powder on their faces. They were not yet altogether degenerate. Then, too, their dresses were picturesquely disordered—for the misguided creatures were born Spanish. They remembered that the Spanish woman is to think herself nice merely because she is a woman, whether she be nicely kept or not. Santa María! They had not yet quite forgotten the land of their birth. But her granddaughters remained good mimics and gossips, and all the saints should be invoked to preserve them from becoming studious. They could write a note, they could count; why should they know geography and those things—and wear glasses? They knew how to play or sing and embroider. Ave María! they were accomplished, and lazy, and darkly religious, and timorous, except with gentlemen. Well did they know that a woman can trust nothing in the world but a gentleman.

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“But,” Dr. Vincent objected, “very little trust or confidence has been shown *me!*”

This was logic. Mamita was dazed, but not convinced. It was not necessary to be consistent at her time of life.

“Ask our cousin, the musician,” she said. “He is a Cuban. He knows.”

Dr. Vincent went to the Spanish hotel in ——Street.

“Is Mr. Louis Diaz in?” he asked.

“I don’t know, but I’ll find out,” said the clerk, who betrayed a sibilant South American dialect by squandering the letter “s” upon his English words with prodigal unconcern. “Here, Juan, go up to rooms 20 and see if Señor Diaz ’s there.”

Juan went up the stairs, singing and spinning a piece of money in his hand to amuse himself.

Half an hour passed.

Again at the desk Dr. Vincent put his question.

The clerk looked as if nothing had happened, rang a bell and waited. After a while the same boy appeared.

“Here, Juan, iss Señor Diaz at homes?”

“Oh, I forgot! No, he isn’t.”

“How do you know?”

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"I knocked."

"How many times?"

"Once."

"Go ups and knocks agains. Perhaps he wass asleep."

Around the stove in the office there was a group of Cuban men who apparently found the climate of New York trying. They were wrapped in overcoats and huddled together like so many monkeys, attesting their humanity, however, by smoke. Each gentleman had a cigarette in his mouth, which he would remove only to curse some one for opening a door. If it had been a little cooler they would have been sitting upon one another to keep warm. They were melancholy. They loved to be melancholy. They drank black coffee, and smoked excessively, and composed dance music that had a lively movement but an underlying melancholy strain throughout; composed verses, also, about empty nests and blighted hopes.

These men had missed the priceless discipline of healthy boyhood. Children until they reached the age of sixteen, they suddenly became men. The change was instantaneous. One fine evening they were

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put to bed early by nurse or mother; the next they were at a ball in full evening dress, with flaring cuffs and low-cut collar, making hot love to every woman present, young or old.

Have you never marked the veteran air of one of these fledglings? "Our women are pretty playthings," he is saying. "They must have no cares. If they are naughty, we beat them."

In his own good time Juan returned, saying, "No, he is not there."

"Fools!" cried the clerk, "idiots! Why didn't you remind me that Señor Diaz 'sgone to give a concert in Bostons, eh?"

Then as a last resort Dr. Vincent betook himself to the head of the family of his fiancée.

At his place of business he found this terrible person—a stout, handsome man, with abundant black hair and heavy mustache and imperial—whom he had never seen at his home, where everybody except Alfredo feared even to speak of "papa dear."

"Papa dear" was very much insulted. It was altogether improper for a young lady to go out without her family. What did Dr. Vincent take him for? Allow his

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daughter to go to the play alone with a gentleman? Never!

Then the quiet doctor set his snare. "Have you not consented to trust me with your daughter for life, sir?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, you might trust me for one evening."

"*That* is quite another thing," said Señor Diaz, so intolerantly that Dr. Vincent lost his temper.

"Well, then," he declared, "I cannot think of marrying Miss Gloria if her family have such a bad opinion of me." So he put on his hat and left the office abruptly.

Not one of his friends would have recognized the usually deliberate Dr. Vincent in the figure that hurried along Broadway. He was excited as he probably had never been before; and yet he was not planning an elopement, or even devising means to induce Gloria to marry him out of hand. A term had been fixed for their engagement, and he was not vain enough to believe that she would do anything rash for his sake. No. He was muttering over and over again to himself, "I shall give her up!" He *was* angry.

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Now Dr. Vincent had one confidant, and he was making all haste to tell to it his distress and his resolve. When he reached his rooms, in a quiet up-town street, he took his confidant from its case and tuned it.

Ah! but a man who loves can play; and the man who does not love can only perform. What harsh and grating sounds his violin gave forth that afternoon!

But as the room darkened and the fire grew brighter and the luxury of his surroundings began to mellow his spirit, a vision of beauty rose before him. There she seemed to be reclining upon the cushions of his great lounging-chair. Black eyes, set deep in the head, with dark lids and long, silky lashes; brows and complexion unequaled in the world of realities. Such a white skin, such pink cheeks, and the most delightful lips that always wore a soft smile! The eyes were half closed.

Then Dr. Vincent's violin spoke to the vision in a voice of passionate love, infinitely sweet.

This man, who seldom trusted to words the expression of an idea or sentiment above the commonplace, was not a commonplace person after all. He had the soul and the

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skill of a great artist, for he was able to utter those deeper feelings in the language of music. Yet not one of us had the faintest suspicion of such a thing until the following Thursday evening.

The following Thursday evening a reception was held at Señora Diaz's. All her friends were there—even "papa dear" put in an appearance.

The Spanish-Americans are very fond of one another's society, and their receptions are not formal but cordial. Each member of every family is invited, from youngest to oldest, and all come! To invite one or two out of a family would be a positive insult. When they are met they do little dancing, but they play games, and there is always music.

As the evening in question wore on, and different people had performed in one delightful fashion and another, Cousin Louis having played his very best, and distinguished amateurs of both sexes having sung, some one remarked, in a pause which followed one of these songs, that he had seen a violin case in the hall, and wished to know to whom it belonged and why the owner, whoever he or she might be, had not brought it in before

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Cousin Louis pointed out Dr. Vincent, and said he had seen him bring it. Dr. Vincent laughed in evident embarrassment, and seemed inclined to deny the charge; but when Louis stepped out into the hall and presently returned with the violin in his hand, Vincent was surrounded on all sides and his honor thrust upon him.

Standing there in their midst, he laughingly tuned the instrument, declaring at the same time that these were the only notes that he could produce. Indeed, it looked as though he were fooling with the thing and knew little or nothing about it, in such a light manner he held and used it. But suddenly he stepped out from the throng into an open space. Then he glanced just once at Gloria, who was watching him eagerly from her corner, and began. At the first accord made by the bow drawn over the strings the company started in amazement; at the second, dead silence reigned, and the perfect artist was alone in his own world, unless, indeed, it would be truer to say that he and Gloria, in the midst of all that company, were alone.

Such a picture he made! His whole soul seemed to be poured forth in those deli-

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cious sounds, and with him he carried his listeners. Each face in the room was a study of unconsciousness.

He may have played for an hour, so much was expressed. It was the story of a whole life. Or perhaps it was but for an instant, so finished was the sweetness and beauty of that music.

When he lifted his head and let the instrument fall to his side, the whole room for one second remained in the same stillness. In fact, it was as still as though a whole world full of the cares that make life verbose had died; and in that sense all those people were still as death, and then of a sudden with one impulse everybody sprang up and surrounded him, shouting, screaming hoarsely. Cousin Louis rushed to Dr. Vincent, and throwing his arms about him, kissed him on both cheeks, tears standing in his eyes, and crying, "Bravo, amigo mio, bravo!" And then the company seized upon Dr. Vincent, and beat him and pulled his hair and pinched and slapped him; one man who could not get near to Vincent himself taking the violin and making horrible sounds on it to express the pleasure he had experienced. They were

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all too wild even to let the artist play an encore.

In the midst of this confusion, supper was announced, and at the sound, "Eh, supper! supper!" every one screamed. You see it suddenly came to be like a public affair. Some one called out, "Make way for the king of musicians!" and before he could refuse, Vincent was lifted by strong arms and borne in triumph from the room and seated in the place of honor at the head of the longest table. All cheered the louder at this, and Louis cried, "Before we eat, we must drink the health of our artist king!" The suggestion was immediately carried out, after which the supper progressed in an exceedingly noisy manner. It was amusing to look about the tables and see the different attitudes of the various people as they discussed Vincent's playing. One man was drawing an imaginary bow over an imaginary violin, perhaps saying to his friend, "The way in which he played those high notes!" You might see a lady and gentleman sitting together, eating and talking at the same time, the gentleman, after having exhausted his lungs in praise of the wonderful musician, moving his head

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and eyes upward, as though to say, "It was divine!" In one corner was a crowd of ladies, who had been served and then left to themselves, each trying to say more than the others, one of them drawing all the fingers of her pretty hand into a bunch and kissing them, as though she were exclaiming, "And how good-looking he is!"

Finally, after their dry throats had been wet with red wine, and their appetites satisfied, their thoughts once more turned to music. They entreated Vincent. He did not refuse, but chose a strain so sad that when it was finished his hearers had not the spirit even to applaud. It was a greater triumph than the first. Taking his violin, without bidding any one adieu, he left the company.

As for the other guests, they were in such a dejected state that very soon afterward they too went home, so subdued by the delightful feeling of melancholy that every one made love to his or her escort, whether that was strictly allowable or not.

When the last guest had departed, "papa dear" marched up to Gloria. Without relaxing his stern manner he said: "This is

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quite a different matter. To the artist everything is permitted. Your Dr. Vincent may take you to purgatory alone—alone, do you understand?—if he will come here and make paradise for me before you start.”

II

From New York to Seville— (Continued)

Vincent and Gloria were married soon afterward, and for several years continued to live in New York. The mere fact that they were married to each other was in itself sufficient, and it did not come into the mind of either of them that another place might be better. They lived in the indicative mood, present tense, repeating to each other, "I am, thou art, we are," and taking no thought of might, could, would or should.

In this positive, straightforward, simple part of their conjugation—their present almost perfect—to him she was constantly an expression or express image of those hidden thoughts and ideal strivings which he so seldom uttered; and to her he was still transfigured and glorified by virtue of his having once or twice dared for her sake to disclose the depth and strength and beauty of his nature.

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After several years, however, they both had a touch of the subjunctive. This is how it came about—their conversation may be given without change of a syllable.

(At that time, it should be premised, Gloria was not yet quite an invalid.)

Gloria said, “Don’t you think—somebody—mamita, in fact—thought it might be better—”

“For him?” Vincent asked.

“Him!” cried Gloria. “It may be her. It might be better for It not to be in the city when It first comes.”

Vincent deliberated. “Yes,” he said; “and we should be happy in the country ourselves.”

Nothing further was said at the time by either of them. We know their habit of silence, and could easily have guessed, by the tender and dreamy expression of her face, in what quarter Gloria’s thoughts were busied. As for Vincent, he was reflecting that his own earliest associations had been rural, in harmless freedom; and his features were lighted by the whimsically tolerant smile of a modern amateur in philosophy, who reasons: “Whether it be true or not that a child imbibes the love of beauty, and

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so a noble ambition, from country scenes, we must at least be certain that our boy will have to enjoy flowers and all that kind of thing soon after he is born, or he will never do it keenly; for after a while he will begin to smoke."

So a transfer was agreed upon without discussion, and they changed their residence to a town in the vicinity of New York, where they passed a season of suspense and anxious expectation in which their vocabulary was almost limited to I, thou, we—and he, she or it. The close of this period was marked by a burst of happiness that may not be adequately described, for the reason that very good experiences of life are only to be known by their fruits. This best experience will surely teach one to pity, and it may inspire some genial work to which brain and heart contribute equally; but the reader will apprehend its full meaning to Gloria and Vincent by dwelling upon the significance of the following transposition of pronouns, and the emphatic position of the first:

He, thou, we, I.

* * * *

When the boy was old enough to stand

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a sea voyage they decided to spend a few months in Seville. They had often thought about it, of course—being such as they were—and had cared to visit it; and then their friend, Rodriguez, had been talking to them about it. “Even if you were a stranger passing through its streets,” he had assured them, “you would say there is no other city which is a paradise. You would see through the archway of each house a beautiful court within, with flowering plants and a fountain in the center, where the family meet, and friends come, and the most wonderful stories are told.” And when they had decided to make this journey they were delighted to hear that there was no satisfactory guide-book to Spain. “We shall be delivered from the oppression of guide-books,” they said. “We shall be guided by our own sympathies—away from shows and show places; we shall pass our time in enjoying the Intimate Thing.”

III

The Intimate Thing

Looking down on Seville from a great height, as from the top of the Moorish tower called the Giralda, one thinks this the most compactly built of cities. All the houses clustering in a circle seem to be under one roof, so narrow are the streets, so small the open places. Fitted into an elbow of the Guadalquivir and surrounded by a vast cultivated plain, the city looks somewhat like one great circular building with an irregular and variegated roof, upon which—upon the roof itself—people are moving about.

That view of flat, livable housetops fascinated the Vincents, and soon from their own *azotea* (as they learned to call it) they began to take their first quiet observations of the life of the city in the streets, in the balconies and windows, and on the neighboring housetops. (Of course their particular *azotea* was neither more nor less than

THE INTIMATE THING

the roof of the house that sheltered Dolores and Anita and General Cordoba's family and Mr. Taswell Langdon and Mr. Sullivan and others whom I am to tell about. If it had really been any other house I should have feigned that it was the same.) Well, the pavement of this *azotea*, composed of large red square bricks, was, almost level; it was surrounded by a parapet three feet in height; beside the parapet stood several rows of plants in earthenware jars; and beyond this agreeable foreground were other *azoteas* and other flowering plants in endless sequence, until the view was closed on one side by the gray mass of the cathedral, and on the other side by the blue and white and brown church dedicated to San Pablo.

Leaning over the parapet, they looked down into the street below. A cab was standing at the corner, and its driver, on catching sight of a promising "fare," called attention to himself and invited the man to enter his carriage by hissing like a snake.

"That seems to be the usual means employed to attract notice," said Vincent.

"A hiss means 'look back' or 'look here,' " Gloria murmured at his side; "and

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we shall be hearing the sound from morning till night, indoors and out."

"As though to prove Seville a paradise by constant reminder of the serpent," Vincent had begun to say; but then a carriage passed. The ladies in it caught sight of an acquaintance; thereupon they stretched out their arms, opening and shutting their hands repeatedly. That would seem to mean that they wanted one to come to them; but no, it only means, "How do you do?"

"See that old fat priest," said Gloria, "holding up his skirts and tip-toeing like a woman across a muddy place."

At a distance, and yet to be seen from this *azotea*, was a foundling hospital called the Cuna. In the wall was a small, square door. Vincent and Gloria saw a veiled person furtively approach and ring a bell. The door opened mechanically and disclosed a cradle, in which the veiled person laid something very gently, and departed unquestioned. And Gloria drew back and went to look down into the court of their own house. There a maid of all work was on her knees, scrubbing the marble pavement. She was singing a Moorish lament; she had a red carnation stuck in her hair;

THE INTIMATE THING

she was decidedly good-looking; she it was who began to wash the dining-room floor that day while all the guests were still seated at table.

But presently Vincent called to Gloria, and together they leaned over the parapet to watch two women whose little tilted steps—so quick, yet with slight progression—made the perspective of the street seem at fault. Couldn't you tell, from the sliding, self-approving tone of their conversation (you could catch the tone, though not the words), that Liseta had been saying to Papita, "Let others be beautiful; let me be fat"?

And the little church Liseta and Papita were leaving on the right—that would be worth looking into. One day Mr. Taswell Langdon was passing by that little church, and through the open door saw that the sacristan was up on a ladder washing a window, and at the same time making responses to the priest who was saying mass. At the foot of the ladder stood the sacristan's young son.

Mr. Langdon heard the priest intoning, "Dominus vobiscum—"

And the boy at the foot of the ladder

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calling, "Papa, little mother wants you to send some money, for there's no bread in the house."

And the sacristan, from the top of the ladder, threatening with his wash-cloth, responding to boy and priest in the same breath: "Go to the dickens, or I'll throw this at you.—*Et cum spiritu tuo.*"

And from their *azotea* Vincent and Gloria saw a pretty example of the Spanish custom of following. They saw Anita and her maid returning from a walk, and young Mono following Anita home—but ever following at a respectful distance. He was content to watch her mincing, high-heeled gait, and to hear the passing men, even coachmen on their boxes, exclaim to each other at sight of her, "Andaluza pura!" condensing all praise into the words "pure Andalusian," breaking off any other talk in order to say it, with eyebrows raised in admiration. Meeting a priest, who was Anita's father-confessor, the women stopped to speak with him, and Anita reverently kissed his hand. Then they passed on, and Mono joined the priest, whom he also knew. The priest held out the hand that Anita had just kissed. Mono, instead of merely

THE INTIMATE THING

shaking it, as men do, raised it toward his lips, intending to steal what had been given to the Church; but he reckoned without the quick intelligence of the good confessor, who had not reached the age of sixty without learning what most men know. There was a clean upward stroke of the reverend hand, from the flexible reverend wrist, passing Mono's mouth and neatly snubbing his nose.

Then both men laughed a little—the younger man with constraint—and separated.

When Anita entered the house and the door closed behind her, Mono looked upward, and in general recognition of "her family," as he would have said, bowed to the Vincents, whose smiling faces, projecting beyond the parapet, were looking down at him.

I don't think I need explain what Vincent and Gloria understood by their expression "The Intimate Thing." You will understand it as well as they. "The Intimate Thing is the true joy," Vincent used to say.

And what delight they took in some of the streets! How fortunate for them, as

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well as for Seville, that the city was planned and built by people who knew how to live in a hot climate—that the old town was such a network of narrow and tortuous lanes, paved with square blocks of stone, passing between closely built Oriental houses. *They* could appreciate the wisdom of the Moors. When in the bright plazas and wider modern streets the heat was intolerable, the dark lanes were always cool. Even the accursed hot wind, when it blew, could not blow around so many corners as the old streets had. Nothing less than a whirlwind could wind and twist as those lanes wound and twisted. An intelligent traveler could scarcely find his way among them, with a plan of the town and a compass in his hand, and with the advantage of being able to ask for direction from time to time; so what could a mere visiting African hot wind do, without such assistance?

Yes, the winding of the streets was delightful to them; and you know that peculiar feeling, that thrill one has when one first gets into a country that is sympathetic? I can't bring myself to talk about it very much, for it is a delicate spirit that takes

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flight and is gone if you forget that at most you can but touch it lightly, intimately, and briefly; but I would find the words that strive (shame on the weak striving of words!) to convey that virginal sense of one city.

And what is a city, pray? Is it the thousands of people whom you do not know, and the houses you do not enter? Or are its citizens for you the people whose hands you may touch, if you put out your hand?

For Vincent and Gloria, the people who lived in the same house, in Calle Nohacenada, interpreted Seville.

IV

The Image

Dolores, most winning inmate of the house in Seville, was one of those indolently plump Spanish women of thirty years, who, with softly complaining voices, say only pleasant things. A man had jilted her in order to marry a woman old enough to be his mother and rich enough to own a palace in the Plaza de la Magdalena. Now the forsaken one wore her trousseau with pleasure, and would explain, when anything she had on was admired, "It is a part of the trousseau Fuentes." (Fuentes was the name of her faithless lover.) She was considered a very deep character and a well-read and serious woman. Her reading embraced the lives of the saints and authorized extracts from the Bible. Beyond that point a self-respecting Spanish woman's serious reading may not extend. If she be able to read at all, is not that circumstance admirable enough? Shall her highly impressionable

THE IMAGE

nature be exposed to all the radical suggestions of modern literature? What should she gain that would not be a pitiful exchange for this exquisite simplicity which is hers now, but which she would surely lose? Thus reasoned the priests, among whom she had friends; and each week she passed hours in seeing that the rooms of reverend persons were swept, dusted, and decorated with fresh flowers. She was an excellent pianist, but grieved because she had no voice for singing; therefore she had resorted to a delightful expedient. She recited, half singing, and accompanied herself on the piano. To watch her during this performance made the chief pleasure of it; the lifting of the eyebrows in questioning, and then the answer with a sad smile, showing the whiteness of her teeth, her breast heaving beneath the trousseau Fuentes.

What a fool Fuentes was!

In her boudoir Dolores had placed an image of the Virgin Mary on an altar, with a step where she might kneel. The altar was covered with pieces of rich satin and silk, and at the feet of the image lay penitential offerings of lace, ribbons, and jewels that she had especially liked to use in her

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own personal adornment; and there was also money, both banknotes and coins—these things all stained and bespattered with holy water. As she herself would explain, in such quaint English as she had picked up during a visit at Gibraltar: “These things I gif María (gave to the Virgin Mary) wen I mak-a the seen (when I committed a sin). Wong day I estriker my servangt. Then I sleep. Ing the middle of the night I hear *plang!* I cry to my servangt, ‘Rung, see wat fall!’ She fly; she come back; she tell-a me the altar ees all down, all een pieces. I put eet up again; I gif María wong hunder pesetas; I sprinkle, sprinkle all ofer weath holly water.’”

María, the Blessed Lady, and unblest Dolores were two of the heroines of the household; and another heroine's name was Anita.

V

Mr. Sullivan and Anita

Mr. Sullivan was a young Irishman who had been sent from home to preach at the English Church in Seville during the winter months, and who found himself detained until June. He was obliged to wear the hat and habit of the society that sent him—the hat being low-crowned and wide-brimmed, not unlike those worn by Catholic priests in Spain. It appeared to be an imitation. His long frock-coat hung in folds about his lank figure, making him an overheated thing, at least a foot taller than mortal man.

Although a source of amusement to the Spaniards, flouted in the streets as a “mock priest,” or an “English priest with a Catholic hat and a sweetheart,” Mr. Sullivan’s good humor was unfailing. Sometimes his genial spirit would even prompt him to return the soft answer, for he spoke a little

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Spanish with a rich brogue, and used his huge, thin hands in Spanish gestures—which made them look like fans that closed and hung toward the end of each remark. So he would stand at a loss and inwardly perplexed, yet wagging his handsome black beard, and creasing his pink cheeks in conciliatory smiles.

His congregation was restricted to tourists, few in number, and to the English residents, also few and perhaps a bit demoralized; so in his plain room Mr. Sullivan found his only pleasure. And now even that peaceful retreat was to be invaded.

From the neighboring village of Santo Ponce came Anita, a young girl who knew precisely as much about restraint or obligation as she knew about sickness. She had heard that there were some people (she took it for granted that they must be oldish people) who were anxious about their manners and concerned about their health. As for herself, she took no thought for either. She was absolutely healthy; she was equally natural in manner; an Andalusian hoyden who powdered her round face with care, while she put on her frock with negligence. Her eyes were black as her hair, otherwise

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incomparable, and matchless, save that they matched each other; and a childish naughtiness that lurked in them qualified her sparkling animation, and betrayed a brain overflowing with prankish suggestions. And behind this impulsiveness, this childishness, was assured self-approval. If Dolores, in whose care she was, reproved her for being forward in the presence of gentlemen, she would stare, then remember, then smile. That would be all; but the smile would ask, "Is it possible for a man to complain of a pretty young woman who dances the dance of Seville, sings the songs of Malaga, and opens her mouth to show how she can twist her red tongue between two rows of faultless teeth?" She always wore the mantilla in the street, with many flowers in her hair; in the house the least observant person was forced to notice that her dress, of one cool color, fitted her so snugly all over that here and there she appeared in place of the cloth.

Upon one occasion Anita informed the household that her sister Miguela, at home in Santo Ponce, had "so many books"—indicating about an armful.

"And Miguela had read them all," she

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continued, looking steadily at her auditors. "Through," she concluded impressively.

"Wonderful!" said all the guests.

"And Miguela writes beautifully," recommenced Anita. "Some of the most aristocratic ladies pay her for writing their love-letters. I wish you could see those letters. Not a blot! Not one! Eh?"

"Wonderful!" all were obliged to repeat.

Miguela came to the house one day; referred pleasantly to America as one of the British Isles; and in regard to her sister said, "You know Anita is not educated, but I believe she will have success because she is so handsome."

Now Anita straightway discovered that Mr. Sullivan was a nervous man, as he drank only tea. She accordingly jumped out on him from a dark corner when he came downstairs. Poor Mr. Sullivan was pretty well startled, but he only shook his forefinger at her, saying, "No, no, Anita. Es muy malo. (That's very naughty.) Don't you do that again."

Next she made a practice of joining him in the streets, which frightened him even more than dark corners, as the natives

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entered into her joke and laughed with ostentatious laughter to see the "English priest walking with a pretty woman."

"I have had a stroll with the pastor," she would exclaim in an agony of mirth. "Dios! He told me to go away, and I made believe I could not understand. It was such fun!"

One evening, about seven o'clock, she put on an English old lady's bonnet and spectacles, took into her hand two small books from the table, and sent Cristina to tell el señor pastor that one of his flock desired to speak with him. Mr. Sullivan was busy packing, for at last remittance and release had come; so when he entered the drawing-room with a glad-to-see-you-but-please-go-soon manner, he naturally had something to say about his intended departure, and Anita, as naturally, made that reference the occasion of a misunderstanding.

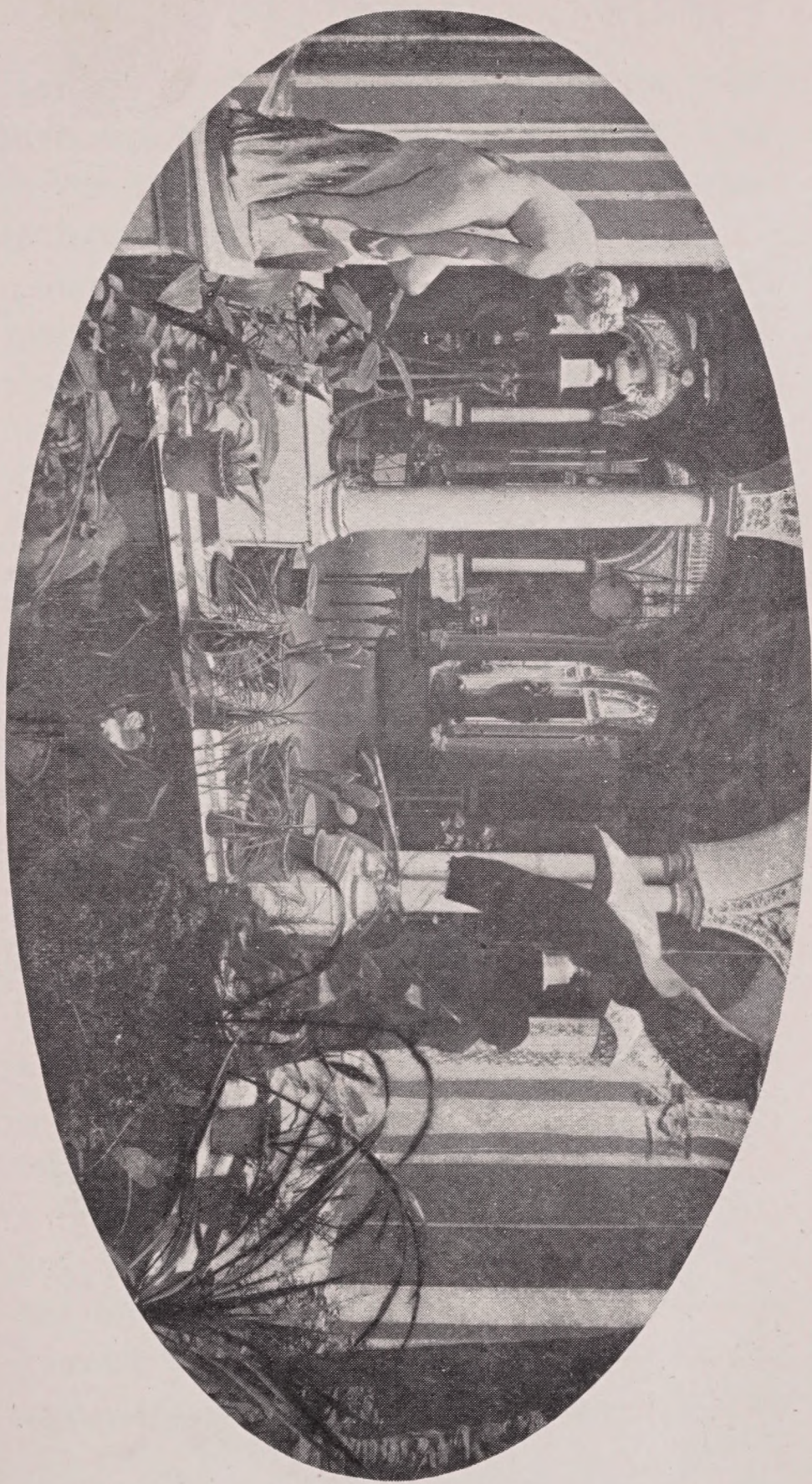
"Yes, if you wish," she said. "Certainly I shall go with you to Ireland."

"But it is far away to my country," stammered Mr. Sullivan. "It is very far; es muy lejos—lejos!" waving his hands in the air to indicate vast space and dreary remoteness.

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“Eh? Very far; muy lejos!” Anita repeated. “Then I must make preparation. Let me go and get my things together to put in our trunks.” Waving her hands with his gesture, and murmuring, “To your country—muy lejos!” she darted out into the corridor.

At that hour the house was very quiet. Dolores, in her room on the ground floor, was bathing away from her gentle face the pillow-marks left by an afternoon nap; patting the skin, which yet would not blush, with a wet towel; and then, more carefully, while cheeks and throat were still damp, patting, patting again with a powder-puff. A moment of scrutiny, during which the mirror on her dressing-table reflected an expression not quite anxious, but more nearly resembling anxiety than could be noted on her face at other times; a question directed to her maid; a light flicking with a gauze handkerchief over the powdered surfaces; then it only remained to slip into a portion of the “trousseau Fuentes,” and to be delicate in her favorite perfumes and her choice mild melancholy at dinner, at the piano, leaning over the balcony, through the long evening—perhaps



A PATIO IN SEVILLE

"The leaves of its plants were invitations."

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through most of the night, which, in summer, she treated as a starlit day, yet with privileges and the large leisure that belong to night.

And so were others who lived in the house quietly engaged at that hour, in putting off the sluggishness that follows siesta and putting on evening dress. Doors leading to apartments and opening upon the corridors which surrounded the *patio* (gallery above gallery, corresponding with the stories of the building) were now thrown wide; for the canvas awning which had been stretched over the court since sunrise was at last rolled back, and a grateful breeze stole through, drawn in from the wide street portal and rising to the heated roof. The leaves of its plants were glossy invitations to enjoy the court, and to admire the well-washed marble pavement and the white corridors supported by columns which stood with precision like clean-limbed footmen.

So all was yawning quietness, appetite, and expectancy that would stir but would not hurry, when Anita darted out into the corridor and up two flights of stairs to her own little room, turning once and again to

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look down at poor Mr. Sullivan, who was watching her ascent with frightened eyes. At each turning she waved to him his own gesture, somehow making her little hands look like fans, too; and with lips and eyebrows in dumb show, said: "*En su pais—muy lejos*: very far, eh? Oh, yes, I go with you." Then she made motions that told of gathering dresses hastily together, throwing them into a trunk and trampling them flat.

Then she disappeared.

A moment later—she always did make things happen quickly—there was commotion in her room; a stifled scream, excitement reaching to the street. Next the guests heard steps short and quick on the pavement before the front door, and a sharp, peremptory ringing of the door-bell.

Now the street door stood wide open, and only a screen of ornamental ironwork intervened between the court and the outside world. Through this screen was visible the figure of a man who had his hand on the bell-handle still, ready to ring again; and from the opposite corridor Cristina looked him over curiously before she called out, "Quien?" (Who is it?)

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If he had replied with the customary "It is I," or "It is the Señor So-and-so," Cristina would have let the iron screen swing open. She had only to pull a knob, which would pull a wire, which would pull a spring-bolt—a very simple contrivance that spares the servants much running to the door and back. But this young man began irregularly.

"I want to speak to the master or mistress of this house," he cried. "Because—"

Cristina withdrew her hand from the knob and let him stand outside. "What does your grace desire?" she asked, resting her elbows on the corridor railing, and settling herself in conversational attitude.

The ensuing dialogue was household property, of course, the speakers being so far apart. Curious heads were thrust out into the corridors to catch a glimpse of this stranger. A little social spasm occurred. Indolent preparation for dinner was transformed into twitching excitement.

Evidently the man knew that every one was listening. "In my person," he continued, "you see a gentleman who has influence with the chief judge of this city, who

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is also much of a gentleman (*muy caballero*). And I have been insulted by some person in this house."

"But—what does your grace desire?" Cristina repeated, suavely.

"As I pass by your house—there, at the side, just now—water is thrown upon me! My new hat—"

(Cristina sympathetically changed her attitude.)

"—for which I paid twelve and a half pesetas only yesterday—eh? You may ask in Sierpes Street, number ninety-four. There you will learn the price of the hat. Now I have sent for the *sereno*."

A ripple of half-suppressed laughter passed around the corridors when he mentioned the *sereno*, for *serenos* are droll night-watchmen, with mediæval equipment of spear, lantern and double-breasted cape. Apparently there was sport to be had with this tall young man; he might show pretty tricks if put to it. The household was drawn from its apartments, formed cheerful groups of three or four in each gallery, leaned upon the railings, and began to chaff according to ability—but only to prove once more that Spanish chaff has too much

MR. SULLIVAN AND ANITA

of ridicule in it, and too little of conciliation. The young man stood his ground; grew quiet and almost white with angry resolution; waited for the *sereno*.

Now, when the latter came he very politely explained that there actually was a city ordinance providing for the severe punishment of any person who threw from the window (so the *sereno* put it) "anything whatever, in itself harmless, in such a manner as to damage the passers-by." Such the unforeseen conclusion. Then discomfiture in the corridors, triumph at the door.

Anita had been gradually making her way downstairs—shyly for her, without a word for any one, or even a jest for Mr. Sullivan; and when the young man, with a threat to invoke the law, was on the point of going away, she walked quickly to the door and stood there, looking at him. Nothing theatrical—no pose; just easily and graciously she said: "I was on my balcony watering my pinks. Will you have one? I spilled a little water that fell on you. What will you do to me?"

"Nothing!" with a quick, deprecating gesture, said the stranger. "I kiss your feet, señorita!"

VI

A Maid

Christina—but she must be spelled without the *h* in the Spanish style—Cristina pronounced her name with an accompanying wave of the right hand, the forefinger and thumb being held so as to form an O. So please call her roundly, Crees-tee-nah.

She was small and slight, but not thin. She was dignified, and altogether Spanish at heart; she was sympathetic in appearance and manner, and beyond all question she was refined. Her parents kept her strictly guarded. Each day her mother or brother attended her in the street when she came to the house in the morning or went away in the evening.

Just one little story about her; and to preface it one needs only to say that there were balconies over the street, as there were corridors on the *patio*; and that during the summer long curtains falling from the tops of the windows and held out by the railing made these balconies so many cool spots

A MAID

where Cristina could sit at her sewing. Now, she became so wedded to a particular balcony, and so passionately attached to sewing, that one might have been at a loss to explain such a marked preference and such industry.

One might have been at a loss before noticing that the balcony in question almost adjoined another, similarly shaded, projecting from the neighbor's house. Then indeed her conduct became more explicable; and one day a perfect explanation drifted in to Dolores, where she was sitting, nodding in a darkened room—these fragments of amorous talk drifting in to her:

A man's voice: "Where were you yesterday, señorita, and what were you doing?"

Cristina: "It was too warm to do anything." She had been folding and packing a part of the "trousseau Fuentes" for Dolores all day long.

The man: "You were reading, perhaps?"

Cristina (archly): "Perhaps." She did not know how to read.

The man: "Did you ever read a story called "Pepita," by Juan Valera? You remind me so much of the heroines in all the romances. But your eyes are finer than theirs could have been."

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Cristina: "You are joking."

The man: "On the contrary, I never jest. Have I not told you that I am of a serious disposition? Am I not studying the law—a most serious profession? Believe me when I say that your eyes are to me the finest in the world."

Cristina: "I am sorry for the town you come from if the young women are not better to look at."

The man: "But they are famously handsome, and especially known for their beautiful eyes."

So, then, it was in this manner that Cristina passed her time on the balcony. When asked to whom she was talking, she demurely answered that it was to the gentleman next door, who was a student at the law school of Seville, and very lonely in the city, as he had no friends.

Although his plight was such a sad one, it seemed to Dolores advisable to remove Cristina two balconies beyond his reach, and to forbid conversation. This measure, however, apparently stimulated rather than discouraged him; and not long afterward he began to invite her further attention by reading in a loud voice beautiful verses, in

A MAID

which she was declared to be the light whence the sun steals his glory, and again a loveliest dove bereft of liberty (*hermosísima paloma privada de libertad*). Presently, when he tendered to her a serenade before dark, with guitar and postures, Dolores felt constrained to appear upon the balcony and to inform him that her maid could not take the time from her work to listen to conversation, poetry, or music.

He was horribly fascinated and dumb.

As Dolores was about to withdraw, he made a gesture of appeal, straining forward and upward with arms and moody dark face, crying:

“Madam—Miss. Your *maid*? Excuse me, did you say your *maid*?”

“Certainly. Yes, sir.”

“I beg your pardon,”—pathetically. He disappeared then, and the household never saw him again.

VII

The Other Dolores

Just at the beginning of summer Seville is a Paradise in which the light air is still full of the fragrance of orange blossoms; a marvel then, with its delicious gardens and shady *patios*, its hot afternoons for sleep, and its cool nights for pleasures and business. Awnings, stretched above, from housetop to housetop, shade its streets; and thus, as though the whole city had been drawn together under a single roof, all good citizens allow themselves a familiar and homelike negligence. Formality and the formal usages of society die on Corpus Christi evening, when all the shipping in the river is illuminated, and so is the Tower of Gold, and so the Triana bridge; and when gay crowds on the promenade and the quay flutter and chatter in a scene from fairyland—quite illusive, unless it be objected that many of the female fairies are inclined to be fat. That is the last effort society makes

THE OTHER DOLORES

to wear good clothing. That is the beginning of summer. Immediately after Corpus society gets ready to go away to the seaside, or puts on a linen gown once for all, and in darkened rooms begins its summer-long occupation of holding open the linen gown with the left hand and fanning its indolent, plump neck with the right.

During the warm weather, after coffee in the morning, some of the household would go to walk very early, so as to be in before ten o'clock, when the real heat of the day began; and when they returned from these early walks they were always glad to rest in the court where a fountain plashed forever, and the sun never came. Then sometimes Cristina would be told to bring her castanets and dance a few figures of the seguidilla (or as they called it there, the Sevillana), which she would do with easy perfection and a little body all full of conscious grace. Such countless creeping steps her feet would take, while from the hips she was swaying, and while her arms were making long, languid, sweeping curves above her head; and then the click-clicking of little wooden disks to inspirit, and that gay music of the dance which sounds as

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though it were in advance of the steps and yet with them!

One morning Cristina was dancing to give pleasure to General Cordoba, who sat with Manuela, Feliciano, and Gracia.

“What dance like the Sevillana to make eyes sparkle and the blood course through the veins?” the general was saying. “How Cristina shows her little feet, but how discreetly, as her skirts sway in the short steps; with what an air she lifts her head when the arm forms a semi-circle in front of her face; what triumph at the end of a *copla* her small figure expresses as she strikes an attitude, with the long ribbons hanging down from the castanets.”

Manuela and Feliciano and Gracia had been ejaculating, envying, and trying to learn. “How did she take that step now? Would she explain it?” Yes, Cristina would explain it; she lifted her skirt and repeated the step so rapidly that one had less idea of it than before—a result which pleased her; and when accused of not wishing to reveal her art, she laughed and made in rapid succession a number of peculiar little sounds with the tongue against the roof of the mouth and the teeth, emphasiz-

THE OTHER DOLORES

ing this amiable negation by shaking her forefinger.

While this was going on Mr. Taswell Langdon came in from the street, bringing with him the man who, as a stranger at the door (with his new hat drenched), had made the little sensation a few days before. Langdon evidently intended to take him upstairs to his own room, but the dance was too strong an attraction; the two men hesitated for a moment, then Langdon went forward to ask General Cordoba's permission; then beckoned to his companion, and a formal introduction took place—to the general and to the general's three daughters.

"It's lucky I've brought Dr. Lejero," said Mr. Langdon in faulty Spanish, "for he's no doubt a judge of the seguidilla; perhaps he dances it himself."

Dr. Lejero availed himself of this opening, and began to entertain the three daughters, while Langdon explained to General Cordoba that he had met the young man at the club and had taken a fancy to him. He was such an entertaining fellow—this Lejero—and so quick-witted. That had probably been just a trick of his, Mr. Langdon thought, to have a word with

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Anita, when he caught sight of her on her balcony and made a row about his wet hat.

The dance had been started up again, after the introductions, and all of the little group applauded Cristina's steps and made merry.

Then, inopportunately, as it seemed (unless Lejero's coming brought this to pass), the chief woman of Spain was manifested.

For by slight degrees the interest in Cristina's dancing flagged; a sedative influence, that yet was not oppressive, seemed to control the gay spirits and to be felt by Cristina herself. Dr. Lejero said afterward that it was as though one had been dreaming of revelry and had awakened in a church. Presently he—Dr. Lejero—drew attention to himself by the strange expression of his face and by his reverential attitude. He was looking at some object on the farther side of the *patio*, and the others, following the direction of his eyes, saw a woman going along under the arch of the corridor to a door, through which she passed into Dolores's apartment. The woman looked toward them, before she disappeared, with eyes that were kind, but without personal recognition—as though observing from some

THE OTHER DOLORES

remote place and unconscious of being visible.

“The Virgin Mary,” said Lejero, and he made the sign of the cross.

“That’s Dolores,” said Feliciano, and laughed, but rather nervously.

“I don’t think that woman was like Dolores,” said the general.

“But it must have been,” cried Manuela.

“No,” said the general; and he, too, made the sign of the cross.

Mr. Langdon would have liked to cross himself, if only to show that he was not a mere spectator. He had the Protestant feeling of shame, as though he had unwittingly come upon people at their private devotions.

VIII

The Cordoba Family

The people of the household thought themselves fortunate in that they lived on terms of intimacy with the Cordoba family.

General Cordoba, the father, showed at a glance that he went into good society, being better dressed than his three daughters, and having a certain manner—deliberate, quietly expressive, almost majestic. When his family had accepted an invitation from some friend, one seldom failed to notice that, while excessively polite, General Cordoba was conscious of doing a favor by his mere presence, and that an occasional gleam in his eye corresponded with the unspoken suggestion that he would shortly be getting away to his club. He was sure to be the center of attention, and even during the visit his daughters made much of him. A tall and handsome man he was, attesting the success of his military career by the correctness of his bearing, the turn of his head,

THE CORDOBA FAMILY

and the soldierly cut of his scrupulously buttoned coat. A darker hue had been laid upon his florid complexion by the sun, during his campaign in the Philippines.

The oldest daughter, Manuela, was almost plain and rather subdued. Evidently she was thought, by herself and the others, to be not only the oldest, but positively old. Her age was twenty-four.

The second daughter, Feliciana, an attractive widow of twenty-one, with a son of four summers, had none of the ways of a married woman. But that was natural enough; her little episode was not an uncommon one. There had been a young man who looked very well in his only suit of clothes; who stood in the narrow street beneath her window throughout the day, to show that he scorned work and lived only for a glance of her dear eyes; who was not allowed to enter the house, but each evening "plucked the pea-hen," as their phrase is, at the lower iron-barred window, plucking away, one by one, all her feathers of reserve and concealment, in spite of the iron bars that kept them physically apart (or perhaps one should say, with the aid of iron bars, for it is physical insecurity that makes spir-

VENGEANCE OF THE FEMALE

itual reserve); who then took her away, and proved that bread and onions shared with her were enough—for a fortnight; who at the end of the second week brought her back to her home, and who then died. Feliciana continued to be a young girl, going out with papa and sisters.

Gracia, the youngest daughter, was pretty. The Cordoba family looked upon her as their beauty, and she was expected to achieve great things—perhaps a rich Cuban or a “really nice Englishman.” The latter sort, they all three conversationally assured Dolores, existed sometimes, as but two years before they had known such a fine fellow. He never “wore clothes like horses”—no! And he had been equally attentive to all three, they said; but Gracia whined in speaking of him, and insisted that every boat coming into the port of Seville during her afternoon strolls on the quay was an English boat, and fancied she saw the “Junion Acky” (Union Jack) waving from her stern.

These girls gave their time and thought to their father, in their desire to make him utterly comfortable, economizing in every other direction, so that there should be

THE CORDOBA FAMILY

enough money for him and for his club and for his clothes; but they also hid their self-sacrifice, or confessed it only in the slightness of their neat figures. They spoke in low tones, with frequent gestures of hand and fan. Once a week they went to the Paseo, the riverside park of Seville, where Society drives, rides, or walks. Three little martyrs, they went only on Thursdays—"for their father feared they would become too well known if he took them more frequently," they said. The general went every day.

But it is a comfort to know a few martyrs personally, in order to see that their lives are not solid misery. These sweet martyrs took their daily walk, always accompanied by a maid. Their way led through public gardens, where they could see many people who were going to the Paseo; past the barracks, from which the officers called out complimentary phrases, and down along the stone quay—with idle ships in line and uniformed commanders on deck, under white awnings. Then, as the martyrs lifted their skirts daintily over the ever-moist paving-stones, what hearty appreciation!

Once, especially, a bluff commander,

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sitting with his officers and friends drinking aguardiente in the cool air of the late afternoon, arose and stepped to the railing and saluted them, and said: "At your feet, young ladies. Accept my compliments, for you have the prettiest feet I have seen in all the ports of the world—having in mind Manila and Havana and San Juan de Puerto Rico, at the very least." Whereupon the other men clapped their hands and cried, "Hail, Andalusia." The martyrs did not look up, of course, but remarked, one to the others, "What insolence!" and declared it would be their last walk in *that* quarter. So, on the following day, all three were there at the same hour; and in addition to the maid they had brought a friend. And Gracia (she of the most marvellous feet) said to Feliciana, as they peered cautiously about, "That boat is gone."

"Which boat?" the friend asked.

"Where some silly men were yesterday. I am so relieved."

"And I also," said Feliciana.

"And I also," said Manuela.

IX

Dr. Lejero as the New Friend of the Cordoba Family

General Cordoba belonged to that small class of Spaniards who strongly disapprove of the bull-fight. "It is an amusement fit for savages," he declared; and his daughters were forbidden to speak in praise of the sport. Occasionally, however, some of their relations would take them, for the charm of having such naïve spectators as companions. "Do you remember, Gracia, how well Pepita Morales put those flowers in my hair, the day we went with our cousin to the fight?" you would hear Felicianita ask, months after such a grand occasion. "Yes, indeed," Gracia would reply; "and what a fine bull the third one was. He killed twelve horses, and I held my gauze fan up before my face all through it, and the man in the seat in front of me thought I was crying—when he saw the pearl spangles on my fan—and nearly cried in sympathy."

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One afternoon, when Lejero was at the house talking with the Cordoba family and Vincent and Gloria, the cousin to whom Feliciana had referred came in. He wanted to see Mr. Langdon, but stopped to greet his uncle and cousins most politely, and Gracia accompanied him to the foot of the staircase.

"Eh, Pepe," she asked, "are you going to the fight to-morrow?"

"Yes, indeed," was his answer.

"Ah, Pepito," she sighed, "how I envy you."

"What is that you say, Gracia?" the general interposed from the distance.

"I was only saying what fearful affairs those bull-fights are, and how many poor horses will be killed to-morrow."

"Ah, my dear, you are quite right," said the general. "It is monstrous."

Now, Lejero was a passionate lover of bull-fights, and would even travel to Madrid and Port St. Mary to see them—indeed, he was not always content to be a mere spectator; so he was plainly irritated by General Cordoba's views. Gentle little Manuela guessed the cause of his vexation, and tactfully made for him an opportunity

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to speak in defense of his favorite pastime. "I know so little about it all," she said plaintively to the guest. "I wish you would tell me who are the prominent bull-fighters. Can you make me a list of their names, in the order of excellence?"

Dr. Lejero had been sitting on the edge of his chair; in his mouth a cigarette, bent almost double, so that the lighted end threatened to burn his beard. This request brought him to his feet. "You want them written down?" he asked, with emotion in every other feature and an upward jerk of the curled cigarette. "Wait" — opening out one hand as though to ward off the Cordoba family. He stepped to the writing-desk and helped himself to pencil and paper, allowing no assistance and evidently fearing interruption of his train of thought. With the right forearm on the desk, ready to begin the list, with head thrown back, the forefinger of the left hand pressed to the brow, he sat for an instant; then a quick circular movement of the pencil and a vigorous thrusting out of it as he uttered the name "Mazantini," with a smile of triumph. "The king of fighters," he added, and wrote it down.

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“And he is handsome?” Manuela suggested.

“I should think so,” Lejero said. “How he stands in the arena”—himself standing and waving his hand outward from the chest; “and the grace of that mighty arm in carrying the *capa*”—holding an imaginary cloak on his arm in imitation of Mazantini. And so he went on to the end of the list, naming the great “first swords,” and showing by a gesture or two not only the principal characteristics of each man, but his own strong points, as though by inadvertence.*

And now it was General Cordoba’s turn to feel irritation. Too courteous to tell Lejero that he was but proving himself to be a savage by his enthusiasm for the bullfight, he resolved that he would say exactly those words to Manuela and Feliciano and Gracia when their guest had departed; and meantime he tried to lead the conversation back to the subject they had been discussing before Pepe came in. “You were right, no doubt,” he said, “when you maintained just now that the Holy Virgin really has

*A note on bull-fighting by Mr. Langdon is given at the end of the volume.

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more power in these days than in any previous age. To our feminized civilization she is a suitable and an appropriate divinity, just as—well, just as Wotan and Thor were appropriate and suitable divinities for rough and virile Scandinavians. And inasmuch as her power is rapidly increasing, it seems logical to expect new manifestations of it—manifestations that may even shock us at first, because they seem miraculous and supernatural, for the very simple reason that they are part of a new order of things. But of course when it comes to mistaking Dolores for the Holy Virgin—”

“You thought so yourself,” said Lejero, quite hotly.

“Yes, for a moment,” replied the general. “It was certainly a very strange illusion, and I never had such a feeling before; but as against the evidence of Dolores herself, you know—”

“No, I don’t quite know!” said Lejero. “I’m not sure what I ought to think; but one thing is absolutely clear, and that is that the Virgin is more real, as a person, than any mere woman of Spain. It should not be regarded as strange if we see her; it would be strange indeed if we should never see her.”

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There was silence for a moment, during which this consideration was permitted to sink into the minds of all.

And Gloria, with her hands folded in her lap, had this vision: It seemed to her that the Virgin Mary had become a visible participant in the affairs of the people of the city; that she led by the hand a veiled woman who had laid her baby in the public cradle (you remember); that, neither more nor less exclusive than was Christ when He lived on this earth, she drew near to all sorts of people, in sympathy—and that the people were more drawn toward her because she was a woman and altogether human; that especially the gentle and simple-hearted were in her care, so that Dolores's devotions were offered less frequently to the image in her room than to the ever-living Mary in person.

Lejero continued: "I have been talking it over with the American, Mr. Langdon, who is such a famous scholar. He says my idea about the Virgin is half true—and the true part is terribly serious. And he has given me a story to read that shows how

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the power of the Holy Virgin began and how it has been growing. It is worth listening to. Now I shall tell it."

And he did tell it.

We have not had a chance to describe Dr. Lejero yet, and so it would perhaps do no good to speak about his manner of reciting this story—with the flame of Spanish eloquence that swept in a few minutes, it seemed, from the beginning to the end of it.

It will seem longer in the reading, and yet it should be read rapidly, if at all; so let it stand in a chapter by itself.

X

Mr. Langdon's Story, "Vengeance of the Female," as Told by Lejero

Well, there was an old room, and an old mechanic, with a mechanic's wonder-working hands and a thoughtful face.

It was a shop for mechanical toys, and the largest toy of all represented the solar system. On a very grand scale indeed was this toy. It was much larger than you can possibly imagine, and it was complete in every particular. Even figures representing the creatures living on some of the planets were there.

The good maker of mechanical toys had just finished the population of a moon.

"This is well," said he, but without enthusiasm.

Then, after a short pause (which to the inhabitants of the moon would have seemed a matter of a thousand years or so), he continued, "These toy beings are perfect." There was another pause, in which another

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thousand years elapsed. The maker of mechanical toys yawned. "These toys are *too* perfect for my taste," he said. "They don't change. From the beginning they have always the same perfection; that is tiresome!"

He nodded, slept; ages passed. He awoke, and still was bored. Meanwhile the toys in that moon had crumbled into dust.

"Now," said the mechanic, "suppose I make some toys that are imperfect, and give them the impulse to perfect themselves; and then watch them while among themselves they work it out."

He leaned his great mild-featured face upon his hands; then closed his eyes and covered them with his fingers, to shut out the sight of multitudes of toys which he had made on a different plan—toys that were all perfect and tiresome. The mechanic thought. Darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the little Earth was without form.

The mechanic's thought moved upon the face of the waters of the Earth, so that life began; and the continents appeared, and the Earth for a moment (to the creatures upon the Earth it seemed thousands of

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years) was the busiest spot in all the workshop. For he made a great number of toys and a great variety; and, because they were constantly changing, he became more and more interested in his work among them.

“I might make a collection of the best of these to keep for my own pleasure always,” he said, when putting the finishing touches on the pouch of a toy kangaroo and beginning to model the skull of a toy ape. But presently he found himself studying a few mechanical toys which were so cleverly contrived that they seemed at first sight to be quite distinct from all the rest, although they were really no more than a slight improvement upon many others that he had made. For example, they stood on their hind legs, yet could walk, run, and leap with ease. The fore legs were thus free to be put to other uses, and were made so that they could deal a blow or throw a stone with force and accuracy. More than all the other toys they had caught the spirit of the mechanic’s plan. They moved easily and quickly in obedience to his thought—so easily, indeed, that sometimes they seemed to have anticipated it. “They are almost independent,” their maker said; “just a lit-

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tle more thought, and they can go on by themselves."

Folding his hands, he watched them, and two of the remarkable toys enacted a little tragedy so naturally that it seemed to be of their free will.

A male toy of the highest class approached a female of the same pattern. They were both shaggy toys, almost covered with hair; their shoulders slouching forward and their sinewy arms hanging away from the body, as though they were on the point of dropping on all-fours. A fierce struggle followed. The male and female were evenly matched, for while the female was perhaps a bit heavier, the male excelled in masterful purpose. With one accord they clinched and wrestled, straining until their very bones seemed to bend; presently, falling sidewise together, they rolled over and over upon the ground, tearing each other with teeth and nails, yelling, snarling—at last but gasping. And the male triumphed.

The female submitted to the male while he was with her, but smote her breast and tore her tough flesh when alone. And the mechanic saw far into the future when he

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perceived in her savage, narrow, and heavy-lidded eyes a gleam that seemed like the promise of immortal hatred. Yet she continued to live in subjection, serving the male in all ways for his comfort and pleasure; in terror when he was near, with detestation when he was absent.

"This will be the beginning of a fine plot," the mechanic said, "in the story of this toy race: just the working out of this conquest by the male, and all the different ways in which the female will be avenged. There will be nothing else of real importance. All the other happenings will be, in one way or another, comparatively slight consequences of this struggle. Well, the Earth-toys are a promising lot, so I shall keep on working at them for a while."

And this decision was justified by a near event; for as the mechanic watched he saw a change taking place in the female. Monotonous fear and hate occasionally made way for a new expression. The female at intervals became pensive, conscious of a new life within her. At such times her cruel eyes became almost tender, and, if her master was near, her submission to him seemed to be almost willing.

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Fitful showing of another nature, and of short duration. Soon a smaller and finer image of herself was laid upon her breast; but she pushed it aside, and, glaring into the face of the male who was leaning over her, struck him with such force that he staggered backward. Then her mechanism was broken, and she did not stir again. She was thrown aside, and finally her material entered into the composition of other toys. She was more than replaced by the little new toy—a female also, but somewhat smoother than the broken one. The mechanic, however, saw in this successor the same threat of undying hate.

As time went on, mechanical toys of this particular pattern received more and more attention from the mechanic, and were greatly improved, both in appearance and in the complexity of their mechanism. It was no longer true of them that they merely responded to their maker's thought. No; they actually thought for themselves, more or less, and their superiority to all the other toys became so marked that the mechanic decided to make the experiment of putting them in charge, and letting them carry out his plans with respect to inferior toys. He

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accordingly enclosed a part of the Earth and arranged it like a beautiful garden; and, to make the experiment on a safely small scale, he chose only one male specimen—the most advanced of all—and one pair each of various inferior toys, taking care that the latter should be the most docile of their kind. These he placed in the garden under the leadership of the superior male, whom he called “toy-man,” the inferiors being called “toy-animals.”

The man proved himself to be easily first in the garden. But he had scarcely begun to feel at home there before he demanded a female of his own class. The mechanic complied, indeed, but tried to avert the danger he foresaw by making a female of the very latest pattern, the man's equal in most respects. Moreover, he took part of the man-toy's mechanism to use in constructing the female, so that the old hatred might be less strong—so that the female might be like unto the male in nature.

This female, when she was completed and placed in the garden, he called “Woman.” And truly it did seem at first that love of the man had been engrafted upon her; but at length this apparent love was shown to

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be only hatred in a more subtle and dangerous form.

So sweet were this woman's words that it seemed she caressed them as they formed themselves in her mind, and then kissed them as they fluttered out between her red lips. She was somewhat lower than the man, and somewhat, though not conspicuously, his inferior in physical strength. Compared with the original female of her species, the differences were chiefly in the smoothness of her skin, which had lost the covering of hair, in erectness of carriage, in the roundness of her limbs and the grace of her movements.

Now, this garden was an interesting place for the man, because he had his duties and the flattering sense of power, but to the woman it was dull. She was only a sort of inferior animal in her man's eyes. She knew herself to be attractive, yet was limited to a single admirer, who soon took her presence as a mere matter of course. She had her little troubles, but no one of her own sex to sympathize with her; nor was there a smirking auditor for her flood of small talk, which stagnated, and so oppressed her, pent up within her breast. In one word,

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she longed for society — smooth - skinned society at any cost.

But society was to be found only outside the garden; therefore escape from the garden, at any cost, was her aim. If she could only discredit the man in the mechanic's opinion, expulsion for him and escape for her!

She did not know the delights of society from experience, but by dint of questioning she had drawn from the man all that he knew in regard to the outside world. Such fragments of information had been joined together by her imagination, and the mosaic thus formed her ardent desire had colored with the brightest hues. She firmly believed it a true representation of the world. As for the man, he had partly forgotten the hardship, toil, and bitter strife from which he had been rescued; and in the security of the garden his thoughts, when they went back to that former life, busied themselves chiefly with its rare but excessive pleasures. So when they walked together in the garden, toward evening, she would lean upon his shoulder and pour into his ear sweet poison—such glowing descriptions, such tantalizing vistas of enjoyment, such maddening assurance of infinitely varied delights!

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One evening she had taken his senses captive, and like an eager child he begged her to go on, whenever she paused in her dear story. And then the knowledge of good and evil—of the world beyond the garden—seemed to both of them as a luscious fruit to one dying of hunger and thirst.

In the morning the man said: "Well, then, let it be as you wish, and not as He willed who made this garden; let us taste both good and evil. And tell me how it is that you know more than I, although you have seen less."

The woman laughed. Near by a serpent lay warming itself in the sunlight. "One of those things coiled about my neck and whispered in my ear," she said mockingly.

Then the mechanic took them both up between his thumb and forefinger, and set them outside the garden; and he passed his hand over the garden to destroy it, for the experiment was a failure. The woman had not been made like unto the man in nature—not enough like her old enemy to forget that he *was* her old enemy. And so that antagonism had wrought their downfall.

Now, thousands of years (as men and

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women, laboring and heavy-laden, reckoned time) passed away before the mechanic would again put his hand to the work of further improvement in the very complicated structure of these mechanical toys. It did not seem a long time to him. Meanwhile the race of men and women went of their own accord "to the devil," as the saying is. They did literally imagine a devil—multitudes of devils—and made these devils chargeable with their misfortunes. And women had become much more unlike men, having gradually adapted themselves to a sheltered existence, to men's demand for pleasures and diversions, and to the servitude of home and family. The women, especially, believed in devils, and sought to protect themselves from the harm of devils by propitiating them. So devil-worship was the beginning of their religion.

Their devils were more and more exalted, until people came to make a distinction, calling the more excellent devils by a new name—gods. Finally some of these gods were believed to be no longer evil, but actually good; and these good gods were implored to take in hand mechanical toys and toy-society generally, and to put their

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disordered mechanism to rights. Those who offered such petitions unwittingly appealed to the good mechanic, who there-upon gave his attention to them once more.

“The trouble all grows out of the old male-female feud,” said the mechanic to himself; “and the only way to help them is to get rid of the difference in their natures, so far as possible. Well, I have tried making the women like the men; now suppose I make the men more like the women.” Then he decided to impart still more of his thought to the toys, and to work among them. But instead of teaching and working in person, he chose to work through a few individuals whom he prompted and advised.

One of the individuals thus distinguished was a woman named Mary. He filled her with his own spirit and with the especial purpose he had in mind, so that kind acts, sweet words, and gentle thoughts made up her whole life. And when she bore a son, that child was quite unlike other children, for he had the serenity and sweetness of his mother, and a great purpose, also received from her, lifting his life above small cares, ambitions, and contentions. So the people

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who saw him said he must be a child of their god, and their vulgarity pictured a miracle in gross coloring.

He had Mary's nature, with scarce a trace of his father; and so the opportunity came for the woman's plan.

Mary's plan was merely an expression of her intense womanliness—of her mild, conciliatory, and yielding character. Made for love, she was all for love in others, and would have had all people gentle and amiable as herself. Hatred she knew in only one form: a timorous and shrinking hatred of brute force, of reckless passion, of merciless justice. That is to say, she hated those things which were especially characteristic of the male, and which the male had impressed upon the laws and customs of that day. Her plan, therefore, was to form her son's character on a pattern which seemed nobler than the fashion.

Really, although she could not realize the fact, this pattern was her own.

So she strove in love during the child's infancy. Those feelings, thoughts, and traits which she loved, were cherished in him and grew to fill his whole being, and when his ambition awoke it was an ambition to spread

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over the whole earth the teachings of his mother, and, in the highest sense of the word, to feminize all men, even as he had been feminized.

No more womanly woman than Mary was subsequently made by the mechanic. He continued to work through the individuals whom he prompted, but changed the woman-pattern scarcely at all, except that gradually and quite naturally he gave the female a dash of that robustness which he was taking away from the male. As for the male, he, little by little, was fairly reconstructed—to such an extent that finally he himself looked with detestation upon many of the attributes which had been regarded as manly, and even as the crowning distinction of his sex.

How far this transformation has advanced, may be seen from the very latest happening in toy-society.

There was a certain man, known among his fellows as a fairly representative toy. Among women he was spoken of as “eligible.” He was strong, rich, clever, and of good habits.

And there was a certain woman, of marriageable age. She was also strong, clever, and, of course, virtuous.

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The woman looked upon the man, and decided that she would like to have him for her pleasure and her service. She attracted him with charming skill; she overcame him; she compelled him to promise, in effect, that he would support her, his wife, in luxury and idleness. Many other toy-people stood by, to see to it that the man kept his promise, and to threaten him with punishment more or less severe if he failed in any slight particular to carry out this agreement.

The man showed himself no match for the woman in the principal concerns of toy-society, because such matters had always been the peculiar province of woman, whereas man was comparatively but a beginner. Still, all went quite well in this marriage so long as the man's wealth lasted. The man had learned the womanly virtues of submission, patience, conciliation, and modesty. He was what toy-people now call a "manly man," though to the original toy-men he would have seemed contemptibly smooth and dainty—neither more nor less than womanish. But when the woman had spent his money, then she lashed him to his work: with her tongue she lashed him; with her exactions; with the approval

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of toy-society she lashed him and drove him to his work.

The mechanic perceived that woman now had her revenge. Finally man had become her slave more completely than, in the beginning, she had been his—more completely, because, when the savage woman had been the savage man's slave, other savages had tried to take her away.

The hatred between man and woman, the instinctive hatred often clothed as love, was changing from tragedy, with its single dense shadow, into comedy, with much diverting play of light and shade.

But then the man's strength began to fail. His work was not up to the mark, in spite of frantic efforts on his part and in spite of all the woman's goading. He began to be often unsuccessful. Shame and the fear of shame seized upon him. He put all of his strength into a last effort, and then lay down to die.

The mechanic still had in mind the first female slave, and he looked to see the gleam of hate, and the blow—such as the woman had bestowed—now to come from the man, to make the story of his subjugation quite like the story of that shaggy feminine crea-

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ture. But no. The toy-doctors were at hand; decently attentive and watchful toys were placed around the tiny bedstead; the man returned the woman's kiss. And then his spring was broken, and the delicate little wheels in the toy-man stood still.

At this point Lejero forgot that the story dealt only with toys, and ended by crying out: "But was it *that* woman who killed *that* man, or was it the work of the Virgin herself—who has subjugated all men?"

No one risked a direct reply. The first comment was made by General Cordoba, who said, "I *should* call that 'The Vengeance of the Female;'" and then, turning to Vincent, asked what he thought of it, adding, "Mr. Langdon is a misogynist, eh?"

"Not quite that, I think," said Vincent; "but perhaps he is not quite a philogynist, either."

"What is a philogynist?" Gloria asked.

"The other sort of fellow," said Vincent: "the sort of fellow who would be apt to point out a fallacy in the very sad conclusion of Mr. Langdon's and Dr. Lejero's story. I think a philogynist would be apt

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to call attention to a certain peril which, in the immemorial contest between man and woman, leads too commonly to a wholly different outcome."

General Cordoba gleefully repeated the phrase, "leads *too* commonly to a different outcome," and said, "Your words betray you, sir: you stand self-accused of philogyny!"

Of course Vincent was questioned as to the peril which he could intimate if he saw fit; and, after resisting for a while, he consented to tell what he meant. It made a little story, or recitation, and it may stand, like Lejero's story, in a chapter by itself.

And first Vincent looked towards Gloria, who was smiling. Both had in mind that other occasion, upon which the one had used the argument of a violin to carry his point about taking the other to the theater.

XI

Vincent Recites

It was certainly one of the smallest feet in the world at that time. It had been bared, and was held out toward her father's friend for his admiration, while she herself was lightly carried on her young father's arm. Her dainty muslin frock, with soft trimmings, was admirably crisp, but she seemed to be more conscious of her shoe—the one that had not been taken off.

“Look!” said her father. “Did you see any girl with such a tiny foot as that in Spain or China, you wanderer?”—showing the other leg, in a snowy sock, which, tapering suddenly, followed the creases in pink flesh down to the pink satin slipper.

“What size is the shoe?” asked the Philogynist, with a laugh, but with fear, too, taking the smooth thing in his hand to turn its sole upward for inspection. “It's a double naught! . . . But here's a greater marvel: here's one of the loveliest things

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in all the world," he added, again touching the bare foot. "A square inch of pure skin is worth more than all the covering in all the dry-goods shops."

He made them look at the sole of the bare foot, where was a shallow well, near the center, lined with dimples.

And, after that, the Philogynist did not see her again until he and she became great friends at Geneva, about three years later. Then it was a pair of sturdy legs in thick, rough stockings, and a pair of feet in ugly common-sense shoes, without heels, that kept along by his side when they went in search of Swiss toys.

One day he was taking her with her nurse out in a boat to see the swans on the lake—and Mont Blanc, that might be a distant great white swan of a mountain at rest against the horizon and the skyline of lower mountains—when Miss Harcourt, a pretty English girl of eighteen, met them, and he asked her to come aboard.

So Alice and her nurse and Miss Harcourt were sitting in the stern, while he rowed. They had fed the swans, and then he asked the child to sing. She had several good

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burnt were such things as these: Maidens had cast in love letters containing promises which had not been kept; bits of ribbon and such feminine keepsakes had been brought by young men who had newer affairs; bottles filled with a liquid that would greatly aid the combustion had been desperately hurled against the logs by a few persons who had decided that in the coming year they would drink only out of mugs; and, offered on this rude altar, were the pipes of those who had learned to prefer cigars.

Jena is such a secluded, old-fashioned German town that customs survive there from remote antiquity. In very ancient times the ancestors of these Germans believed in a god who brought light and warmth into the world each year, overcoming the darkness and cold of winter; and to the townspeople of Jena it still seems but right to greet the birth of the new year, with its promise of light and warmth and life. The great bonfire annually typifies this ever-new gift of the genial old god, and so it has come to be a custom to let this fire consume tokens of all those habits or happenings in the past that one wants to change or needs to forget.

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A little before midnight the dark market-square was crowded. There were two or three men busied about the pile, and a larger number engaged in keeping the central space clear; so the throng was pressed back into a circle, behind which enclosing buildings lifted dim, irregular old stone faces against the sky. And to these gravely expectant townspeople presently came the sound of glad music—a marching band and a strong chorus of male voices, playing and singing in unison, “Let us rejoice, therefore, while we are young”; and into the central space came students of the university dressed in the showy uniforms of their societies. Now quick flames shot upward from the pile and built a wavering column of fire; now the market square was bright as by day. Joining hands, the young men danced around, shouting and straining away, with averted faces, from that burning wrong of the old year and glowing hope of the new. For an instant, perhaps, it was serious; then, in an instant, it all became grotesque. They broke the circle to tear caps from the heads of bystanders—from each other’s heads—to throw them also into the fire; the crowd was driven outward, and

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melted away through the many narrow passages that led to other parts of the town, to people's houses, to taverns—to the innumerable places where sour white beer is served in little wooden buckets; there was a sound of heavy feet beating stone pavements in every quarter, and from every quarter arose the cry, "Health to the New Year!"

The Philogynist was standing with his friends in one of the front ranks in the circle of spectators around the bonfire. He was mindful of the little person whose head was squeezed against him, reaching just above his elbow; and, lifting Alice up in his arms, he placed her on his shoulder so that she might have a good view. But it appeared to be a most unhappy child. She did not quite kick her old friend, but she squirmed; she had to be put down again. Alice was no longer a child, even to the Philogynist.

And as she, little by little, year after year, came to be more evidently a woman, with the oval face and wondering eyes of a Virgin Mary in the Annunciation pictures, the Philogynist saw her only at rare inter-

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vals, until one summer that he passed at his friend's house in the country near New York. They were together then pretty constantly, and with her parents' approval; but somehow she would not see that it was possible for him to come nearer to her than as her father's friend; and for his part, he realized (it happened when he was standing at the window, looking out at the hammock in which she was swinging, though there was nothing of her to be seen but one lithe brown-kid foot) that while he was still a young man—yes, beyond question, he was a young man—he was not so young as really young people.

Well, a year or two later, with a sense of personal loss, he took his dead friend's place one morning, walking up the long church aisle, feeling Alice's light touch on his arm. Her head was meekly bowed under the white veil and flowers; but within billowy skirts, stealing toward the man who came forward with easy confidence to meet her, were feet, clad in white satin, that seemed to coquet with the very altar steps.

But the other evening, when the Philologist returned to New York after a long

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absence, he was sitting in the window at his club, watching the movement in the avenue, and was especially struck with the appearance of the pavements. It had been raining, and the pavements gleamed. They were very dirty, no doubt; the rain-water struggling with that tenacious deposit upon the stones of an ill-kept city was not exactly a pretty thing to study; and yet—and yet—there was such a human quality in the gleam of that wet pavement—the stones were so dear to him, and they were dear to so many, from association; so many feet had brushed them, pressed them, stamped upon them, and clattered over them. The gleam from them was human indeed; it was like the gleam of an eye.

He had touched the bell, and a waiter was standing to take his order.

“Would you have a card, sir?”

He did not hear. His eyes were riveted on the figure of a woman, evidently one over-familiar with pavements as they look at night, standing under the street light only a few yards distant; and instantly the whole course of his blood was through incarnate pain and shame. “So like! so

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like! What a horrible resemblance! what a damnable likeness!"

Just then she bent down and caught her skirts together with one hand, lifting them, and showing a tiny shoe and a silk stocking.

XII

A Lover at Large

It is high time to describe both Dr. Lejero and Mr. Taswell Langdon; and perhaps the best way will be to begin with a saying, to be ascribed to the latter, which was especially true as applied to the former. "These Andalusians *live*," said Mr. Langdon; "in misfortune as in prosperity, they live. They are intensely and socially alive. They are not obliged to buy happiness with money, for their hearts will beat, throb, exult in spite of fate—not just tick, tick like a watch, faster or slower as they are more or less wound up with a golden key."

Manuel Lejero was tall and stout; made estimable by the strong black hairs of his pointed beard and mustache; amiable by reason of his frequent smiles, which showed childishly even white teeth; jaunty, because he took short steps in walking; and the very mirror of Andalusian fashion, only when he wore the Spanish cloak—having



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fourteen different ways of putting it on. He strove mightily and constantly to cover the fact that his father was a Gallego—a native of Galicia, that province in the north which produces the most hardy, the most useful, and the most despised variety of Spaniards. Manuel, however, had been born in Seville, of an Andalusian mother, and as a child had learned from his Andalusian playmates to poke fun at Gallegos. Fancy his position when he became old enough to learn that his own father was a native of that grotesque province. Luckily his father had never figured in society, and few of Manuel's friends were aware of his deep and husky voice, slow and heavy ways, and general clumsiness of thought and action. So the son just went on poking fun at Gallegos, with the rest of the world: and his efforts to become like the Andalusians had produced in him their leading characteristics in excess. Nevertheless, the Gallego blood had assisted him in his career more than he knew, for it had given him that force of will and that obstinacy of purpose which, in happy union with his insinuating Southern manners, had enabled him to become successful beyond his years in the profession of

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medicine; and perhaps from the same source came his enormous physical strength—the strength of an Andalusian bull in a graceful human body. He did not plume himself publicly upon his merits, as many Sevillian youths do, for he really possessed them; but he would let them appear whenever he had professional dealings with English or American people, who, he thought, held all Spaniards to be frivolous and weak.

Socially, his behavior illustrated the more garish Andalusian traits, and he held too exclusively the Andalusian point of view, which is so different from ours and from that of our English friends—so widely different! A little story will show. Here it is:

Mr. and Mrs. Norton of Liverpool arrived in Seville one afternoon, and, after an hour's rest, went out for a quiet walk and to have a look at the town. Passing through a narrow street in front of their hotel, they reached Calle Sierpes, and wandered on into the labyrinthian quarter beyond, where they lost their way. Mr. Norton began to hesitate at every corner, and each time he did so he saw a man in a cloak keeping behind them at a certain distance—which detail irritated him as night

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fell and the lawless windings and haphazard intersections of the streets grew more and more perplexing.

Finally, at a turning, they lost sight of the man; but imagine their surprise when, at the next corner they reached, he stood in a doorway and made some remark to the Englishwoman which the Englishman's ignorance of the Spanish language prevented him from understanding. Still, with racial deliberateness, Mr. Norton waited until he became quite sure that the stranger continued to address his remarks to Mrs. Norton only, before he turned to face the Spaniard with a mighty wave of his English stick, and the question, "Do you speak French, sir?"

"Certainly, sir," was the smiling answer.

"What do you mean by addressing this lady?"

"To pay her the compliments she so richly deserves." The man's teeth gleamed at the pale Englishwoman as he raised his head from the deep bow which had accompanied these words.

"You scoundrel! That lady is my wife."
(A more furious wave of the stick.)

"Ah, sir, your position is, then, the most enviable one, next to that of a Governor-

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General of a rich colony, in the whole universe."

"You have not only spoken to her, sir, but you try to justify your conduct, sir," continued the infuriated Mr. Norton. "And I shall have you arrested for the insult; by my soul, I will—"

"Pardon me," interrupted the other, with an adequate gesture of the hand, which was opened to its full extent, quivered for an instant in the air, and then was drawn back, palm outward, against the breast. "Pardon me, I am not a scoundrel, nor have I insulted you or your wife. On the contrary, I have given up to you one hour of my dinner time in order to admire the graceful lady whom I saw pass with you as I stood talking to a friend at the door of my club—the Labradores Club, in the Calle Sierpes. If you wish to arrest me, you will not fail to find me at my house; and this is my visiting card. With a profound retreating inclination of the body, he, so to speak, saluted himself out of sight.

In hot pursuit the husband rounded the nearest corner, but saw an empty street, and heard only, as in the distance, the light tread of Spanish feet. He hurried to the

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next turning, but corner upon corner appeared, taunting him with acute angles, obtuse angles, never a right angle; turning upon turning appeared, but never the chance for a straightaway dash. With a final oath, he retraced his steps to meet Mrs. Norton as she came toward him, trembling with fear even as he was trembling with rage.

After further wandering, this weary pair reached their hotel, conducted by a *sereno* with lantern and spear. They were very late for dinner—they insisted that it must be a dinner—and Mr. Norton ate his food with a scowl upon his heated face which might otherwise have terrified the natives, but that those who saw him shake his spoon in the air attributed his temper to a mouthful of Spanish soup. “He would bring the fellow to justice,” was his mental comment; “he would see the British Consul that very evening, and inquire whether a gentleman traveling for pleasure in a foreign country could be molested with impunity.”

And he did see Mr. J—, the British Vice-Consul. Naturally he took a guide this time, who led him unerringly to the con-

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sulate in Calle Guzman el Bueno. The consul explained, with much courtesy, that there might have been no intentional rudeness on the Spaniard's part, and requested permission to see the card. When this was produced, "Manuel Lejero," read Mr. J—"Dr. Manuel Lejero. He's not a bad sort, for a Spaniard; one of the most popular young physicians in Seville.

"Dr. Lejero was only acting in accordance with a custom of the country," the tolerant consul continued; "and although the custom was a singular one, it must be endured while one was there."

Nothing would appease Mr. Norton, who insisted upon "appealing, sir, to the common justice of the country to have the custom done away with, sir, in order that ladies might be respected in future."

So he went out from the consulate in a temper.

The affair was actually brought into court.

The court-room was crowded to suffocation by the fashion of the town. The judge was a personal friend of the defendant. There was a rustling of crisp skirts, the ripple of fans opening, the whir of fans in use, the report of fans sharply closed,

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and there were numerous low coughs from the doctor's best patients. One could not say where, yet surely there were a few puffs of smoke from contraband cigarettes and an occasional "ah" from a male throat. With his fair wife at his side, Mr. Norton did not seem in the least disconcerted by this fine array of Sevillians; but, for all their staring, stared back through his eyeglass, as though at a collection of Asiatics whom he had come to teach. Dr. Lejero, in his English coat and French beard, cheerfully supported his own elegance and the admiration of his friends.

"What is the charge brought against Señor Don Manuel Lejero by the honorable English stranger?" inquired the judge, looking toward the interpreter.

He was accused by Mr. Norton of insulting his wife and himself in the streets of Seville. This charge was denied by Dr. Lejero.

"What was the nature of the insult?"

"Following them."

A roar came from the audience, and General Cordoba shouted, "Custom of the country." Mr. Norton was indignant because he could not understand why they

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laughed, and when an explanation had been given he was more indignant still.

“How did Mr. Norton know that Dr. Lejero had intended to follow them?”

“Because Dr. Lejero had so stated when Mr. Norton threatened to cane him.”

“What did Mr. Norton mean by threatening to beat a gentleman in the street?”

“He meant to reprove him for having insulted Mrs. Norton by speaking to her.”

“What had Dr. Lejero said to her?”

Mr. Norton did not know, but the mere fact of his having addressed her was in itself insulting and outrageous, utterly at variance with the customs of England and—

“But this is not England,” the judge began to interpose, when he in turn was interrupted by the exclamation, “*Gracias a Dios!*” (Thank God) from a woman in the audience—which phrase was repeated by His Honor, with a bow of acknowledgment in her direction.

“Still, justice is always freely accorded where due,” the judge continued, “and Mr. Norton shall have his satisfaction if in the right, as soon as Dr. Lejero has made public his remarks to the lady.”

Laughter and applause were given in

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return for this assurance that the remarks were to be repeated; and then the judge questioned and Lejero answered.

The Judge (to Dr. Lejero, who was now requested to stand): "Have you ever seen this lady and gentleman before?"

Dr. Lejero: "Yes; on Thursday, when I was invited to the house of the Conde de F. for dinner. I got there late because I lingered in order to pay the English lady a few compliments."

The Judge: "Mr. Norton accuses you of having addressed his wife twice, and, he even adds, insultingly. What did you say the first time?"

Dr. Lejero: "That her hair was like the golden clouds at sunset."

The Judge (to Mr. Norton): "My dear sir, I cannot find even the most minute insult in so true a statement."

Mr. Norton at this point began to look uncomfortable; Mrs. Norton, on the contrary, seemed more at ease.

The Judge: "What was your second insulting speech?"

Dr. Lejero: "I told her that her eyes were like the blue sky under the golden clouds."

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“Ah,” cried Anita, from the audience, with a little gurgle of delight, “what a poet!”

The Judge: “That was a beautiful comparison.” Then (to Mr. Norton): “Surely, sir, you can find no fault with that truth, but must feel proud to be the owner of so much English loveliness. I hold Dr. Lejero guiltless of any offence toward you or your charming wife. He did what any gentleman in his place might have done, and I can only add that I am surprised that you have not the entire male population of Seville to attack on the same head. For myself, permit me most respectfully to say that, had I not been forewarned in regard to your preference (as a representative of a nation which I salute, with assurance of personal esteem,) that people should say nothing at all, not even the most pleasant things, to your lady, you would now, doubtless, see me a prisoner at the bar, instead of in this judicial chair.”

XIII

Mr. Taswell Langdon

Maturity, having been foiled completely in its attempts to find lodgment in Mr. Langdon's heart, showed itself in the lines of his face.

Some of these lines were apparently due to his way of speaking, for he spoke with a drawl, throwing his chin forward and upward, separating his lips more than was necessary and working the jaw excessively. So the drawl had given him sharp lines at each side of the mouth, and had drawn the skin about the eyes in such a manner that you might ascribe to the latter a vacant expression if by any chance you had failed to notice that these were really eyes of unusual intelligence.

Although an American, Mr. Taswell Langdon had acquired the use of his hands in conversation, because he had been in many countries where he could not at first make himself understood by words alone. A

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sidewise manner, apt to mislead those who insist upon point-blank and staring directness, was in truth merely attributable to the fact that Mr. Taswell Langdon's nose was slightly twisted, and (good-natured man!) he knew that in profile his face was more pleasant to look at, the twist being less apparent. His hair and mustache inclined to length, darkness and disorder, yet he was a very clean man. Every mental picture I make of him must include an umbrella, which never had a snug cover; a good silk umbrella, however, entirely rain-proof—useful also in dry weather, when he came to sunny places.

Though his head was small, it was well stored with knowledge in layers, each layer being labeled, lettered, numbered. He would draw on his funds of information by letter. For example, suppose you had met him in Seville at this time, and the subject of a war between Spain and the United States had come up for discussion. You would have seen at first that he was thinking of the letter *W* and the word *War*, and that, as though by referring to a bibliography somewhere in his cool brain, he was in command of histories of all wars, ancient

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and modern, and was reasoning from the known to the unknown. And then, perhaps, the following conversation would have occurred:

Mr. Langdon: "There is a social barrier between the two races, and this must be broken down by war, of course. It is sure to come to war between us some day, and then the stupid and vulgar element of the population of each country will revile the hostile nation. We who have taken the forces of nature into partnership will overwhelm the Spaniards easily in battle; but when we have battered down the walls which divide nation from nation, when we have received a large number of people of Spanish blood into our Union, we shall be almost defenceless against a certain peaceful conquest which they will undertake. The reaction from violent abuse will lead to overpraise of both sides. Friends of the Latin race will begin to say among us that Spaniards are as superior to us in social talent as they are inferior to us in mechanical skill and invention, industry, commerce, and all that. We shall whip them in war with one hand behind our back; they will whip us socially with one hand behind their back."

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The Reader:

Mr. Langdon: "A true estimate of the Spanish character would lie between the two extremes of censure and of praise; but in one way, among themselves, how much they accomplish now—with how little!"

The Reader:

Mr. Langdon: "Their particular kind of talent, in combination with our material resources and our principles, would make the most brilliant society in the world."

The Reader:

Mr. Langdon: "Oh, as for that, we might draw an argument from the Irish, who are good fighters and good poets—whose women are most beautiful and most virtuous. The distinctive charm of the Irish is probably due to a strain of Iberian blood. It is beyond question that Spaniards of an early day overran Ireland, as conquerors at times, and again as colonists. By the way, I've come across a funny little poem by a resident of Seville, beginning:

'We have not yet forgotten that Spaniards Ireland
won,
And Spanish blood and beauty through all the Gaels
were run.' " *

*A fact. It is interesting to find *Gael* used in its old sense—an Irish, rather than Scottish, Celt.

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It will be observed that no effort has been made to supply the reader's lines in this imaginary conversation; and, if it appears that Mr. Langdon has the last word, it is distinctly understood that the reader always retains this privilege, however much the poor little characters may say. And so let us continue the attempt to realize Mr. Langdon.

With so little physical strength that he shrank from any sudden exertion, or even the effort involved in throwing the shoulders back, he had yet a good deal of endurance—enough for long walks, and for long hours of study and travel. Almost no digestion he had, poor fellow! At the end of a meal his food—carefully chosen and specially prepared, all of it—would seem to have intoxicated him just a little.

As a young man he had known moderate hardship, to the extent of working his way through a New England college; and one story he loved to repeat about himself, perhaps because it sounded like an incident in the career of some leading character in fiction. This story was to the effect that after he had become eminent enough to be the guest of the evening at a certain dinner

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in Washington, his fair hostess, with flattering interest, asked where he had laid the foundation of his learning.

When Mr. Langdon replied, giving the name of his college,

“Oh, were you there?” she said. “Then perhaps you know my friend, Professor X?”

“Quite well, madam,” said he, very simply. “I was his hostler for four years.”

In that sort of way he did, I must confess, affect to be unaffected; but the affectation was so amiable! He was incapable of serious deceit, but just romanced about himself quite innocently, making of himself a character that he could look up to, as well as the rest of us. “You see,” he would say with a laugh, “I have reached the age of thirty without marrying; that has enabled me to treat myself with respect.”

More than once people have said to me: “What is there about this Langdon that makes everybody like him? He is such a plain fellow, so badly dressed, and all that.”

Well, for one thing, he had the reputation of a great scholar, yet always gave you the impression in speaking with you that you were better informed than himself. He wore that decoration which is perhaps more

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honorable than the Iron Cross or the red button or the Golden Fleece: he was decorated by the rare courtesy of knowledge; and to all his capability was joined a certain noble incapacity—for he was so full of kindness as to be incapable of malice. Still he had spirit enough to keep him from being humble. And then, he was sympathetic; he always gave you the soothing idea that your affairs were of vital importance to him; that your person was agreeable to him. “That was his trouble,” he would confess: “everybody and everything interested him; he had not enough strength.”

And while he was making such confessions you would be sure to notice more than ever how he sat in a heap or lounged against some support.

His arrival in Seville became known to the household quite early in the year, and in the following manner:

One morning the postman brought a Spanish circular, which I take the liberty of translating, with inelegant literalness:

“SCHOOL OF SEVEN LANGUAGES.

“A North-American gentleman, who is a lawyer and member of the New York bar, instructor at Yale University in the United States, where, as also at the

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principal universities of England and Germany, he has pursued extensive courses of study and published some literary works in the English language, offers to give lessons in English, German, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek; likewise in natural history, geography, mathematics, chemistry, physics, etc.

"This furnishes to the principal families of Seville an opportunity to secure for their sons the advantages of a most excellent education in the foreign style, without the disadvantages connected with residence in a foreign country.

"Only a limited number of scholars will be received, in order that due attention may be given to them.

"For information apply to No. 1, Fernandez Espino Street."

Now, by all that is modest, what stray "North American" pedagogue was this, bringing his shipload of erudition to the port of Seville, of all places in the world—to ignorant and proudly ignorant Seville? Gloria's curiosity was aroused, and therefore Vincent went to Calle Fernandez Espino, No. 1, "for information." The house was a "house of guests" (in Spanish phrase), kept by a stout, good-looking Welshwoman, whose father had been sent to Seville in the employ of English capitalists. Vincent was taken to a room on the second floor, and there, sitting in a heap on the sofa, was Mr. Taswell Langdon.

Un caballero norte-americano, Licenciado de Leyes, Abogado del Estado de Nueva-York, Catedrático de la Universidad de Yale (Estados-Unidos) a donde, como en las principales Universidades de Inglaterra y Alemania, ha hecho extensos estudios, autor de varias obras literarias inglesas, ofrece dar lecciones de inglés, alemán, francés, italiano, latín y griego, como también de historia natural, geografía, matemática, química, física, etc.

Esto ofrece a las principales familias de Sevilla, una ocasión de arreglar a sus hijos las ventajas de una educación esmeradísima, al estilo extranjero, sin los inconvenientes de una residencia en país lejano.

Solo se admitirá un número limitado de discípulos, para que se les pueda dispensar la debida atención.

Dirijanse por informes a

Calle Fernandez Espino, núm. 1.

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Then great shouts went up,—shouts of recognition and of laughter.

“Did you get my circular?” Mr. Langdon cried. “Was that what brought you?”

“*Your* circular! You amazing old joker!”

“Not much of a joke,” he said, sobering. “In fact, it’s dead earnest.”

“You mean—”

“I mean just what is stated in that grandiloquent circular, adapted to Spanish tastes.”

Then they had a long talk, going over experiences since they had last met, years before; but pray allow me to cut it short. Mr. Langdon had made a plan covering years of study, and, taking a deep breath, had bound himself to the plan by the biggest oath he knew. You see, he realized that he was weak, and he wanted plan and oath to lean upon as he forced his way to the goal. With American ingenuity and adaptability he had continued to support himself, turning his hand to almost any kind of work that had a living in it, yet left some leisure for his books; teaching and writing with moderate success when no more remunerative occupation could be found; laying by money for extraordinary expenses,

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and then, when enough had been saved, spending it to the last cent, without a thought beyond the accomplishment of his immediate purpose. Not the least interesting feature in his plan was that which dealt with the languages, customs, and history of modern European nations. During almost ten years he had devoted all his available time to these subjects, and had succeeded in making himself at home in France, England, Germany and Italy, regarding himself as a resident rather than a mere tourist while in each of these countries; but when Spain's turn came he found himself, not only without money, but also out of patience with the old method of earning and saving. Attempting to conquer this distaste, he discovered that it still grew upon him. So, then—another deep breath (he would not use the word inspiration, saying it was too fine for him)—odds and ends sold to pay his passage; and, still leaning on his plan, behold Mr. Taswell Langdon in Seville.

His circular, issued in haste; Vincent's call, also in haste—that is the whole story up to the time of meeting. The circular served the end for which it was intended: it brought scholars. There was not a word

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in it for which Mr. Langdon had not his reason ready. When Vincent ventured to say that he could not understand the designation "School of Seven Languages" when only six languages were mentioned in the body of the advertisement, the erudite adventurer drawled:

"Well, the seventh language is Spanish, of course."

"But who is going to learn that—in Spain?"

"Why, er—I am going to learn that," he said. "I must do *something* for myself."

As Vincent was successful in his prompt endeavor to transfer both the teacher and his books to the household in Nohacenada street, Mr. Langdon's subsequent experiences were shared as a feast among friends.

Fortunately for Mr. Langdon, in the days when he knew scarcely enough Spanish to make himself understood, his first scholar spoke French fluently.

That was Señora Mendez, Spanish wife of Mendez Bey, a high officer at the court of the late Khedive.

Andalusian society, with its uncertain admixture of Moorish blood and traditions,

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and the influence of a connection with the Philippines which endured for more than three centuries, is half Levantine; and the character of Señora Mendez showed how easily an Andalusian may become wholly Oriental. She was only spending a season in her native town; almost all of the winters of her married life, which began at the age of fifteen, had been passed in Cairo, and her summers in Alexandria.

She told secrets in conversation, still calling them secrets after they were told. "To grow old imperceptibly—that is the secret," she would say. "To frequent balls—yes; but dancing less and less, and spending more and more time in the card-room. To make friends of the women of one's own age; to watch gray hairs come in their heads also; and, sitting at cards, to have occupation for the hands, so that when gentlemen pay court we may be busy, and though they lean over our chairs, we may seem not to flirt at our age. To give up dancing—yes!"—doubling her fist and shaking it with resolution—"yes, but the fact is, *that* does take courage. When one is near the door of the card-room, and one is not yet too plain—one is well dressed—a gentleman invites you

to waltz. He says to one, 'Madame, how does it happen that you dance no more?' And you reply, 'Sir, as for me, the leaves are beginning to fall;' and then you laugh.

"He entreats you; he pays you compliments; he begs you for one waltz more—only one. Then—why, then you *do* need courage; and very graciously you say: 'But, sir, you must excuse me this evening, for the Countess is claiming her revenge at bézique, and you know it is a question of honor.' And then, turning to the Countess, who appreciates your motives, you say: 'My pretty one, I am at your service.'

"One must leave off while the men still desire to dance with one, and then they continue to invite you always—not with the intention of securing you for a partner, but what does that matter to gray hairs? When one passes, the gallant gentlemen say:

" 'Not this evening, Señora Mendez?'

" 'Not this evening, I thank you very much, sirs.' "

This plaintive talk made her wonderfully attractive, for there really was not a gray hair visible above her smooth brow; her lips looked just fully ripe; it seemed there had

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been never a care to take from her eyes their liquid light.

But if her auditor looked or spoke his admiration too warmly, she would know how to cool sentiment with a dash of humor, yet without turning the conversation too suddenly away from herself. “My husband,” she would say—“how I wish you knew him, sir; but he cannot leave his post. He is so good-natured — my Mendez. Fancy: In the morning I may say to him, ‘Mendez, you must get up;’ then I put my little foot against his very little back (Mendez is much smaller than I am). With a delicate movement — ping! There lies Mendez on the carpet. But he is so good-natured. And besides, he is so fat that the fall does not hurt him.

“Afterward, in the evening, when I have seen Mendez, so dignified, so proud, standing before the Khedive with his breast covered with decorations; and when I have heard the chamberlain announcing ‘Monsieur the Baron de Mendez, Ambassador of ———, Consul of ———, etc., etc.,’ then I have said to myself: ‘Fancy it! There is the man I kicked out of bed only this morning.’ ”

English words are either quite naked or bundled up in furs. It is not possible in translation to convey the reserve, the artistic holding at arm's length, that Señora Mendez put into her Spanish or French. She used these languages as a painter chooses his brushes.

An Andalusian Orientalized, Sphinx-like, graceful with a quiet and immovable grace, her stories, which she told whenever there was nothing else to say, were like classics—so pure in style and so smooth. Gesticulation she would indeed allow herself, but using only forearm, wrist and hand—her elbows glued to her sides. If it ever became necessary to raise the elbow for a conspicuous gesture, that would call for a gracious, “Pardon me, like this.” She was indeed conscious of all the animation that was her birthright as an Andalusian; but she fully realized her size; she knew that she was a very large woman. How to indulge in the animation by means of which a slender person wins applause? In her answer to this problem lay her victory, for she attained a sort of quiet sparkle.

And you will not think “quiet sparkle” a contradiction of terms, for you have seen

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the jewels in old white wine as you have held a glass of it up to the light, or you have sat before an open wood fire that has burned beyond its snapping period, but has not yet begun to need a fresh log.

Señora Mendez wrote to Mr. Langdon acknowledging receipt of his circular and requesting an interview at her father's house in Calle Alfonso XII. Repairing to that street of palaces, Mr. Langdon found at the given number a house like a fortress, its heavy double doors studded with enormous brass spikes, a glimpse of greenery in its court showing through the dark portal. Alfonso XII is perhaps the most impressive of Seville's fashionable streets. It is fashionable without being modern; the great residences of famous old families in that quarter seem to have been built with the Mexican and Peruvian silver and gold sent home in the time of Cortez and Pizarro.

The lady was arrayed for this interview in the European style, and she received Mr. Langdon with marked favor.

After the preliminaries had been disposed of, "And you will consent to give instruction in the Greek?" asked Señora Mendez, smiling faintly.

“Certainly, Madame,” said Mr. Langdon.

“Then I am very much pleased,” she said, “for we have many Greeks in Egypt. I should like to learn the Greek from you—conversationally. Will you teach me to converse in Greek?”

Poor Langdon!

He could explain the differences between ancient and modern Greek, he could emphasize the importance of the former and minimize the interest of the latter, but he could not move Señora Mendez from her intention.

“Never mind those little differences,” she said. “Will you not come each day to instruct me in the Greek, conversationally, without those refinements which a woman’s mind cannot grasp?”

She would not take a refusal; he was in for it. Day after day he went to Alfonso XII Street, finding that he was really not expected to teach more than he knew, and that she insisted upon believing that he knew a hundred times more than he was willing to teach or she to learn. And they played cards “*avec rage*,” as she expressed it.

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night, and said they found tobacco very strengthening to the throat.

Gaspar and Ramon Diaz del Castillo, young men respectively eighteen and twenty years of age, went to Mr. Langdon for lessons in a number of subjects. When a suitable time had elapsed the teacher sent in his bill, but no notice was taken of it. Another statement was mailed to the father; still no response.

Now, fancy our honest—scrupulously honest—Langdon, resolved to demand his rights, standing before the wrought iron screen in the portal of the old Diaz del Castillo family mansion, which was situated in a street that leads out from the Plaza de la Encarnacion.

He rang the bell repeatedly, but nobody came. Finally, looking across the inner court, he distinguished the figure of a slatternly maid, who, from the deep shadow of a gallery in the rear, was looking him over at her leisure.

“What does your grace desire?” the servant shouted, seeing that she was discovered. It seemed to Mr. Langdon that the empty galleries surrounding this big *patio*

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swelled the woman's voice with an insulting resonance.

"I wish to see the gentleman of the house," he said.

"And what does your grace want?" she again asked, without stirring from her easy position.

"I wish to see the gentleman of the house," Mr. Langdon repeated.

"Is it about a bill?"

Now, just as it happened, this was quite correct, yet the answer "Yes" would have classed Mr. Langdon with small trades-people and collectors. That would have been a misleading answer, to say the least, so the caller hesitated for an instant.

"I don't know whether he is at home or not," the maid continued.

"Go and find out!" cried Mr. Langdon.

"Anything about a bill?"

In the midst of this dialogue a whining voice from above was heard. Curiosity had got the better of Señora del Castillo, and "Who is it, María?" she asked.

Mr. Langdon caught sight of her over the railing of a gallery on the left-hand side of the *patio*, and called to her.

"Ay, the señor professor! What do you

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night, and said they found tobacco very strengthening to the throat.

Gaspar and Ramon Diaz del Castillo, young men respectively eighteen and twenty years of age, went to Mr. Langdon for lessons in a number of subjects. When a suitable time had elapsed the teacher sent in his bill, but no notice was taken of it. Another statement was mailed to the father; still no response.

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"Ay, the señor professor! What do you

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mean, María, you slut? Open the door, you worthless baggage! Be pleased to walk right in, sir."

As the door swung open and Mr. Langdon entered, he heard the mistress scolding her servant. His rapidly acquired but still imperfect knowledge of Andalusian slang did not enable him to understand all the words used, but he caught terms which he had heard the mule-drivers employ when their beasts required oaths as well as resounding blows to urge them forward.

"Oh, señor professor, you want to see my husband?" the lady inquired, coming graciously forward. "If it's something naughty my boys have been doing, may I not answer your purpose as well?"

Mr. Langdon was forced to smile at this reference to the big-chested boys of eighteen and twenty, but assured her that they had not been naughty, and said he wished to see Señor Diaz del Castillo particularly.

Hearing the word "particularly," the lady emitted a little regretful sound, made by the tongue in contact with the upper teeth.

(Teeth and tongue, the sound repeated four or five times.) "Ah, the bill!" she said, softly. Her teeth, tongue and palate

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were all employed to express regret that cannot be spelled. Regret spread over her round face and became supreme.

Mr. Langdon saw two or three children, who peeped at him from half-open doors. The house seemed suddenly awake, and there was a great slamming of dishes. On the walls of the room to which he was conducted were views of places which the people had never seen; nor could any member of the family tell what these pictures represented. Their ancestor had traveled for the entire race; these descendants bought foreign landscapes.

After a long whispered consultation between the master and mistress of the house, Señor Diaz del Castillo advanced, shooing the children away from *patio* and corridors as he came. But Mr. Langdon heard the children say, as they went with reluctant feet and lingering backward glances, that brother Gaspar and brother Ramon had been naughty, and the teacher had come to tell about it.

"You must excuse these children, Professor Langdon," Señor Diaz del Castillo said; "but I have a nursery-maid and a governess who are jackasses."

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Mr. Langdon was conscious of some embarrassment. "I hope it will not trouble you," he said, "if I inquire why you have not settled my bill, which has been standing so long. I presume a man of large affairs, like yourself, sometimes forgets such trifles."

Shaking his head sadly, "Ah, señor professor," said the other, "you want me to pay that bill." It was not a question, it was a melancholy conviction.

"But I know you yourself want to pay it," said Mr. Langdon; "only, being a man of engrossing affairs, you must have overlooked it."

"No, I have not overlooked it. I shall pay it; but a thing that I always put off to the last is a school bill. There are certain things in life that really seem to be unnecessary."

"But schooling is surely one of the most necessary things in life," said Mr. Langdon.

This statement roused Señor del Castillo from his quiet mood. In a moment he was all excitement. "Education a necessary thing?" he queried. "To a certain point only. It is necessary to read, to write, and to calculate, because then people can-

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not deceive you. A laboring man requires nothing else; a gentleman is born with everything else. What good will the education of those boys do me? I shall never get a *peseta* from them. No, it just gives them the right to be insolent. Let them read the newspapers and learn what is going on in the great world of politics, so as to know the proper views for a gentleman to hold in regard to the defence of his country—that is enough. Still, it is the fashion to send boys to school. My friends Nuñez and Velasquez do it, and I presume they pay. Yes, I wish to pay the bill.”

And he did pay.

Now, as Mr. Langdon went from the great Diaz del Castillo house, he might have been expected (inasmuch as he was a student of the history of civilization) to draw a curious parallel between the views of the man he had just left and the views of that tough old sixteenth-century Bernal Diaz del Castillo, companion of Cortez. But, in point of fact, his thoughts took another direction. He was asking himself how much importance should be attached to the circumstance that these people were so careless in their dress at home: the men without

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cravats, the women in white petticoats and white waists.

“I wonder how much civilization it takes to make people care about wearing pretty what-do-you-call-'ems, to please the eyes, while depleting the pockets, of ‘nearest and dearest’?” mused this student of manners and customs.

You see, it was impossible, *even for him*, at that moment, to think of the Spaniards as a fully civilized people, in spite of his strong prepossession in their favor.

But our good professor did not refuse to receive much younger scholars, even the youngest applying for admission to his *colegio*. Not that there was any merit in this complaisance; he said and thought only that he couldn't afford to refuse them. He was therefore brought into contact with the Spanish idea (not exclusively Spanish, we must confess) that education consists in getting the children out of the house, to let them make a noise in the teacher's house—to which end the Andalusian parent is willing to pay, or promise to pay, from two to five dollars a month, as though for a day-nursery.

Among other pupils, two little boys were

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brought to Mr. Langdon by their mother, the vivacious wife of a banker whose house had a branch or agency in Paris. The family being thus almost equally at home in the world-city and the provincial capital, this lady's character was a product of two distinct yet sympathetic centres, and I can only attempt to show somewhat of the influence of both by setting down a bit of her confidences to Mr. Langdon—and for that matter, to all the world; for this bright woman knew that she charmed people by her confidences. Her Spanish-French construction of sentences may possibly (though I doubt it) be conveyed or suggested in English.

“Here are my last two youngest; I confide them to you, sir,” she said. “My two oldest—if you knew how much those girls’ education cost me at the convent! And what good it do? They never learn anything for success in life. One of the sisters brings them from the convent in Castillejo. That was years ago, but I remember it like yesterday.

“I say to Teresita, after I have embraced her, ‘You glad to be home, my dear?’

“ ‘Yes, ma’am.’

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“Teresita she sit so straight, with her hands crossed—and she a young lady.

“ ‘You love me, Teresita?’

“ ‘Yes, ma’am.’

“I turn to Liseta.

“ ‘Liseta, you hungry, my dear?’

“ ‘Yes, ma’am.’ And she make a long nose; she learn that at the convent.

“Then the nun tell me I can ask them questions in any part of the catechism, and they can answer.

“So I say: ‘Teresita, where’s Paris?’

“ ‘In France, ma’am.’

“Teresita, she know everything!’ ”

The speaker, the banker’s wife, had never before troubled herself to ask where Paris was.

“Teresita, she can tell you all the names of the cities in Australia and America; but what for, my professor? That doesn’t give Teresita success. You think, when she receive a gentleman in the drawing-room she say: ‘Washington is in this state, and California is the capital of some province or other?’ No, my friend, that doesn’t bring the success.

“Then the nun tell me to ask Liseta to play the piano. Liseta, she sit down and

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she play bong, bong!—something serious, melancholy—Beethoven, Mozart—and I say to her: ‘Liseta, have pity! You make me cry!’ That was not to entertain the people. That was not education.

“When did my Teresita and my Liseta get their education? When they went to Paris. At the theatre, at the opera bouffe, Liseta catch the airs by ear. She never play with the notes any more; she play something gay. And she pick up what she hear at the theatre to say to the gentlemen—something funny, something to make people laugh. Above all, she learn to dress. When she ride in the Bois, her shoes, her hats, all—perfection; and people say: ‘That handsome Miss Liseta!’ Not one word about those cities and rivers in America. And, my professor, I pay all that money for those rivers in America; and Teresita she makes no success with those rivers in America.

“One day a card is brought of a Russian gentleman my daughter has met at a ball, and we pass that card around, but nobody can pronounce the name. Teresita has not come downstairs yet. And I say to the company: ‘Wait till my daughter come

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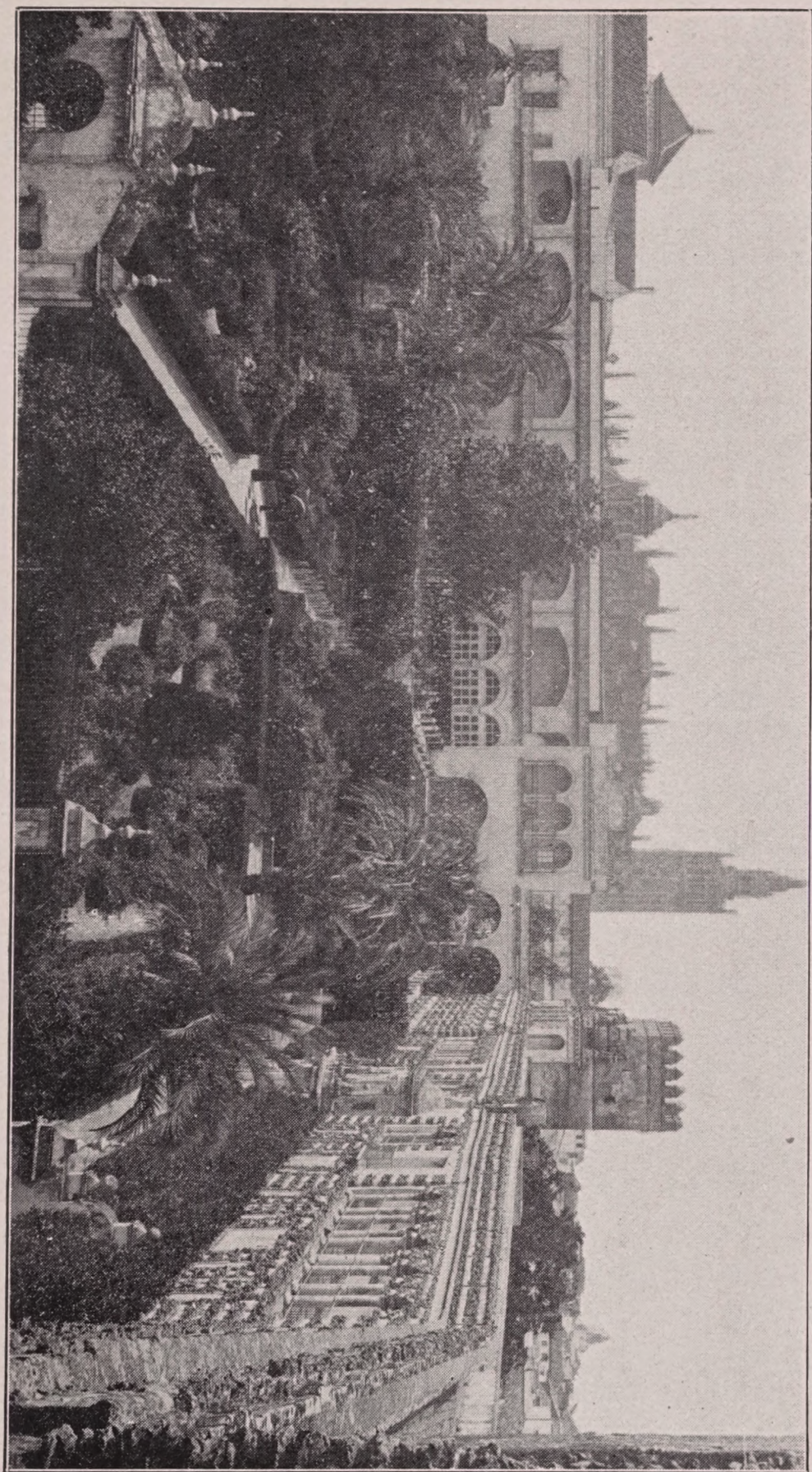
down; she knows how to pronounce everything. In the convent she have learn the names of all the rivers in America, with names like this!'—measuring the names between plump hands, with confronting palms and polished nails on jeweled fingers bent backward.

“And Teresita she come into the room at the same time with a Russian lady who calls on me. And I say to Teresita: ‘My dear, pronounce this Russian name!’ And the Russian lady say: ‘You know, our names are very difficult.’ But I say: ‘Excuse me; she has learned all the names of the Indian rivers, and she can read everything.’

“I give the card to Teresita”—using the palm of her left hand as the card and showing how Teresita scrutinized it.

“And Teresita she read the name out loud. She read aloud, and the Russian lady she laugh, laugh. And I say: ‘What’s the matter?’

“My professor, you see, Teresita don’t know how at all! I spend all that money for those Indian names, and Teresita doesn’t know one!”



ALCAZAR GARDEN

XV

The Vital Thing

One day Mr. Langdon left friends and scholars behind and took a little journey alone to Cadiz.

The train carried him through the heart of the sherry-wine district, and he was tempted to stop at the vineyards; but as he had a letter of introduction addressed to a man named Verges, of Cadiz, he decided to present that first.

At Cadiz, however, was no Señor Verges with the proper initials; the city directory did not contain the name, and the porter of the hotel at which Mr. Langdon alighted was at a loss.

Presently the porter suggested looking in the appendix of the directory, where were lists of the inhabitants of neighboring towns; and there, under the heading Puerto Santa María (Port St. Mary) stood the name that was written on the envelope. So, back again next morning went Mr. Langdon,

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along the gleaming shore, to Port St. Mary, on the northern side of the bay of Cadiz and the edge of the precious vinelands.

When the air was full of jewels of light, Mr. Langdon went through the empty white main street of Port St. Mary until he came to Señor Verges's house. The master was not at home, he learned, but a manservant would lead the way to Señor Verges's bodega.

His bodega!

That was a pleasant word to hear. A bodega is a building used for storing large quantities of wine.

So Verges had a bodega.

The letter of introduction was approved, and the two men became host and guest. The host invited his guest to walk through the bodega.

It was a walk. You must not think of a cellar choked with cobwebs and bottles. Think of a liberal building, the wine in a hundred enormous casks, each of which would fill a room: a cathedral dedicated to sherry, with a hundred chapels of curved oak ranged along its walls. Coming into its dimness from the marvelously brilliant sunshine, Mr. Langdon realized, as one

THE VITAL THING

does when a thing has been taken away, that the jewels of light with which the outer air had been filled were like the picture one forms in the mind of the vital spark itself—the Essence of Life made visible. In the bodega the atmosphere seemed dead, but as they went about from one great tun to another, Mr. Langdon learned (through the ministrations of an attendant who carried a dipper and a dock-glass) where life was in hiding still, though the sun never entered there. Some of the wines he drank were dark as port, others might easily have been mistaken for Madeira, still others were nearly white, with a cool faint taste; but all were sherries, all had come from the vineyards he had seen from the train the day before.

And so Mr. Langdon was led on from good to better until they came to a place of honor.

“This wine that I am now to offer,” said the host, “has been in the cask for more than one hundred years.” He explained that sherries had to be blended as years passed, older wines being added to the younger, and younger to the older, like an infusion of new blood which does not change

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the identity of the receiving body; "but, except for such manipulation," he said, filling a glass with the amber-colored liquid, "this is a wine of the last century;" and he gave an historical account of his treasure, and of the ancient firm of wine merchants, his predecessors—to which narration, although it would have been interesting at another moment, the guest paid little heed. He was drinking the wine.

Señor Verges afterward pressing him to taste other kinds of sherry, Mr. Langdon refused, for he would not consent to spoil the lingering aroma of that fabulous vintage.

That was not merely the best of Spanish wine: that was Spain.

When he told Gloria and Vincent and Anita about his trip to Cadiz, as they were sitting together in the Alcazar Garden, he said that to his palate the wine seemed to be made of delicious living creatures—each drop a thing separately alive—and that while Verges was recounting its history, he, for his part, was swallowing the essence of life, the vital spark, the very jewels of light that had fallen a hundred years before upon the vineyards of Xeres—deathless, bright things

THE VITAL THING

embodied in the drops of the wine—"like the light and the dear vitality in Anita," said Mr. Langdon—and said it *to her!*

And, of all this wise man's sayings, that was the wisest, when he declared that the sparkling atmosphere of Southern Spain, the good old wine, and pretty Anita had one charm among the three—the very same charm for each.

Please think several times of this saying and once of the enchanting place in which it was said—where the vital light was delicately transmuted into gleaming and glowing blossom and fruit.

When some one you like, with persuasion on her lips, sings, "I re-mem-ber an old gar-den," and singing, with a full note for each dear, distinct syllable, lets music rest upon the thought; when she turns from the keyboard to question you with her eyes, to see if you have a mental picture of the same old garden, the very same old garden and no other—why, then you two (bless you!) may have in mind a garden in Florida or a garden in Maine, but surely, surely, its shrubs, its vines, its leaves and its blades of grass have somewhat grown beyond the

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gardener's prescriptive rule, his pruning-hook and his scythe. Surely there are some extravagant branches hanging low over the walks, some tufts of weed in the gravel. Such slight marks of passing time are needed to stir memory. Would Eden itself, if eternally trimmed and primmed, cut back and raked over, look like a genuine old garden?

Not too prim, but indulgently allowed to look genuine, is the garden of the Alcazar at Seville. It is old, indeed, and judicious neglect makes it look so much older that when a gardener informs you that Peter the Cruel gathered fruit from the orange tree beneath which you stand, you say: "Of course; naturally."

At that hour and season, when the imminent heat of summer had already driven others away from Seville, and was about to drive the Americans away also, Vincent and Gloria and Anita and Mr. Taswell Langdon (telling his story of the Vital Thing) were alone there, except for a young gardener, who, at a little distance, fixed hungry black eyes on the beauty of the women, and by his reverential attitude signified that at a

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word he was ready to drop on all-fours and be their dog.

After that day Seville was no longer a paradise. Such things as this were in the air: that presently one would be able to cook an egg by exposing it to the direct rays of the sun at noon in the Plaza de la Magdalena.

I simply cannot tell how dry and hot it became, or how Vincent and Gloria longed for cool, wet things; but I know that their next journey was made—by water, chiefly—in consequence of an interchange of suggestions effected almost without words.

As they sat together Vincent thought about houses with refreshingly chilly and damp walls.

Gloria cooled her fancy with memories of sedgy banks and sweet-flag bogs, and pond-lilies, and boots mildewed in a night.

“I think,” said Vincent, “the most shivery ghosts—”

“Delicious!” said Gloria.

“Are in England,” Vincent concluded. And so they went to England.

An English Interlude

XVI

The Scene Shifts to England

Perhaps one does not always choose wife or husband from that group which in retrospect seems to have been the most charming. At any rate, Mr. Langdon did not. He did not marry a woman of the Sevillian household. But by their amiable contact the Spanish women must have unwittingly placed matrimony in an attractive light, and, thus predisposing him to its contagion, contributed to his conquest by Mrs. Upton, an Englishwoman.

Mrs. Upton was always clever. Here is a letter she wrote several years ago, describing her presentation at court. Let it serve as a presentation of her character to you.

“My dress,” she wrote, “was of black velvet and gray brocaded satin, and I wore my heavy Indian necklace with the uncut gems. The hair-dresser came at 9 A.M. to do my hair over cushions and put in the necessary three feathers. I left the house

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at noon, fell into the ranks in St. James Park in front of Marlboro' House, waited there without moving until two o'clock, and then proceeded slowly to Buckingham Palace.

"On either side of the front hall were the Beef-Eaters, in their ugly costume. We left our cloaks in a large room, where a lot of old-fashioned women servants waited on us, then turned to the left, and before mounting some stairs were looked at to see if we had the regulation number of feathers, and whether they were sufficiently on the top of our heads. We then went along a corridor and through a large room into another room, where about one hundred chairs were set like stalls in a theatre. About one hundred of us were let in, the Beef-Eaters barricading us up like sheep in a pen.

"In front of us was another room, filled in a similar manner with ladies who had come earlier, and the room behind us was also filled by ladies, who had to stand. After waiting about an hour and a half, we were moved into another room, where we sat half an hour. Then fifty of us at a time were moved into a smaller room, where

SCENE SHIFTS TO ENGLAND

there were no chairs. Looking through a passage, we could see the people who had already been presented.

“Here twenty of us were let through the barriers, and found ourselves in a little mirror-room with a lot of swells in magnificent uniforms who spread out our trains for us; and then we walked alone, one by one, into a sort of passage, while the Lord Chamberlain shouted out our names very distinctly.

“I took three steps forward and found myself in the presence of a tired and sleepy personage, who was sitting down. She put out her hand for me to kiss.

“Now, just think a moment! Think what I had gone through between an unusually early breakfast and this late hour in the afternoon; and think what I was expected to do when the Queen put out her hand.

“I was expected to courtesy very low, kiss the Queen’s hand, courtesy to a brace of Princesses standing near (who would respond with jerky bows) and then try to make the regulation number of other courtesies while I backed out almost to the door; there to have another swell, acting as lackey, fold

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my train in my arm, and be hustled out before I had time to breathe; to be run through another door into another corridor, down other stairs and back into the same cloak-room; then to be driven home as soon as my carriage came up. I was expected to admire the hideous decorations of the rooms at Buckingham Palace, and not to care to look at the pictures, some of which seemed to be interesting, or to stop to enjoy a glimpse of the garden at the back, which was very green and quite like the country, with ducks on the lake and . . . I was expected to find diamonds impressive by daylight, and, although I was faint with hunger, not to mind the overpowering odor of the huge bouquets of sweet-smelling flowers which nearly every one carried. (For my part, I left my bouquets outside with my coachman and footman, and I carried a large feather fan instead.) I was expected not to notice that the Queen's chair was very low—temptingly low and comfortable-looking; so low that a *débutante* in stooping to kiss the royal hand might accidentally lose her balance and fall into the royal lap; or, if she did it with design, it might appear to be accidental.

“I did it!

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“It seemed too delightfully refreshing for anything. It made up for all the stupid pomp of the dullest day of my life. To see the agony of a few dowdy old women; to receive the agile assistance of an electrified lord-in-waiting (who laughed with me about it afterward); to feel the Queen’s knees nestle me in toward her, with the true mother’s instinct, instead of letting me slide to the floor, as Queen Elizabeth would have done. I assure you it was a delicious instant.”

XVII

Mrs. Upton and the Ghosts at St. John's House

The writer of the foregoing letter had been one of Mr. Taswell Langdon's good friends before she became Mrs. Upton. During the brief period of her married life and two years of widowhood, this friendship had been maintained, though chiefly by correspondence. Now, it so happened that when Mr. Langdon fled before the heat of summer in Seville and found himself in London, he received from Mrs. Upton several letters, dated at St. John's House, Warwick, in which the young widow described her surroundings at the time of writing with more than usual zest. We have only to piece together certain portions of these letters in order to have a description of St. John's House in her own vivid language.

"If you have ever been in Warwick," she wrote, "you must have seen St. John's House. It stands back from the street in



ST. JOHN'S HOUSE

GHOSTS AT ST. JOHN'S HOUSE

its own grounds, between the Avon and the road that leads to the castle from the station. You must pass it also on the way to or from Leamington. When I came here in July with my dear old servant—the one I still call nurse—we first stopped at the Woolpack Hotel, but as there was no garden and I did not like being among tourists all the time, I soon set out with nurse to find rooms elsewhere. Nurse said that on the way from the station she had noticed a very fine, large, old-fashioned house, which had a board like a sign-post in the garden advertising ‘apartments.’ This sounded promising, so we went into a pastry-cook’s shop to inquire our way. The shopkeeper told us where to go, and added, with a rather quizzical expression, that the house was kept by two Miss Whins.

“I shall never forget my first look into the garden. Such an old-fashioned place! Even then, in broad daylight, I felt a kind of shiver steal over me. We walked up the wide, neglected path and knocked at the door, which was opened by a very stout old woman. She asked us in and begged me to sit down until she called her sister, ‘who always attended to the business part,’ as

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she expressed it; then hobbled away goutily, crying, or rather snorting: 'Eliza Whin! Eliza! Eliza Whin!' I scarcely knew which to look at hardest, this fat person with the oddest cap I ever saw, or the quaint dining-hall we had been ushered into. It was a very large square room, the stained floor of which was partly covered with a fine old rug. The walls were hung with tapestry, but the only furniture was an oblong table of oak in the centre, a huge sideboard, and several chairs. Although it was early in a bright summer afternoon, the hall was gloomy, for the lattice windows admitted but little light. A faint musty odor hung about the place. Nurse said it looked like a room where ladies and gentlemen used to say 'belly.' I felt enchanted with it all, for I seemed to have stepped into the fifteenth century of a sudden.

"Presently there entered a little woman with a wrinkled face, short gray hair, and nervous hands, dressed in the fashion of fifty years ago—like an illustration in a back number of some ladies' magazine. She did not see us at first, but kept looking about as though the room were empty. Finally,

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with a 'Good afternoon,' accompanied by a half-courtesy, she invited us to follow her.

"We went through a narrow passage which led to the foot of a staircase. A very odd staircase indeed! It was of black oak, it was winding, at every few steps it had a landing, and at every landing a door. Where in the world did all these doors lead? We were only going up to the first floor; now, pray, what business had so many doors between the ground floor and the first? Another passage led to the rooms which Miss Eliza Whin offered me, and even these were not all on the same level, for the one on the right had three steps leading up to it. This we entered, and found it large and dim, though with a window at either end, one looking on the driveway and the other on the kitchen garden. A big four-post bedstead was in the centre, and again doors at every side. One of these I tried and could not open, when my guide explained that it led into another part of the house, but had not been unlocked for years. 'There were four separate staircases in St. John's House,' she added, as though that accounted for any number of doors with

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rusty locks. This apartment, she thought, would do for little old nurse.

“For myself, she suggested the room she next showed us, which was very much larger than the first, and contained the largest bed I have ever seen, with eight curtains of yellow damask. Here the enormous lattice window with wrought-iron fastenings overlooked the grounds in front of the house. A suspicious door was here also; and this is the door you shall presently hear about. My future landlady informed me that this also was always locked, the room on the other side containing ‘nothing but antiquities,’ which were exhibited to the public on payment of a shilling.

“Between the two bedrooms (nurse’s and mine) was a sitting-room, extending from the front of the house to the rear, so that one of its windows looked out on the street, and the other on the near River Avon. In the centre hung a glass chandelier with eight branches, which gave promise of much light on the dingy walls and the somber old portraits of Miss Whin’s relatives, turning their eyes in all directions with austere scrutiny of our doings as we moved about. There was also a portrait of Lord Brooke,

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whom Miss Eliza seemed to consider as a member of her family, because he had once been her father's pupil and had remained their constant friend.

"Then she told me that St. John's House belonged to the Earl of Warwick, who had given the use of it to her sister and herself for their lives, as their father had lived there and kept a school there for many years, and had been the young lord's tutor. 'The ancient building,' she went on, repeating a sentence she had learned by heart, 'was founded about the year 1175 by William de Newburgh, as a monastery dedicated to St. John the Baptist; was afterward occupied by the Knights Templar; still later by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; in the fifteenth century and subsequently was transformed into a residence for gentlemen's families, and finally came into the hands of the Earl of Warwick.'

"I decided to take immediate possession, but first I asked: 'Are there any other lodgers?'

" 'Not at present.'

" 'Then there is no one else in the house?'

" 'No, indeed!'

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“ ‘It is not haunted?’

“This last question I asked half-jestingly, but the little woman became quite indignant at the suggestion and replied that such a thing had never been heard of. It was not exactly reassuring to find her so touchy on this subject; still, I engaged the rooms and returned to the hotel for our luggage with only pleasant thoughts of our new home and feeling that it was quite a privilege to live in a house with such a history. An hour later we were comfortably installed. A fire was burning cheerfully in the sitting-room; the grim portraits looked down at us more approvingly.

“As the day was closing in, I strolled about in the beautiful old garden like one in a dream. A high stone wall, covered with ripening fruit, hid the town from view. Only the towers of Warwick Castle could be seen above it on that side, while on the other side were broad green meadows that sloped down to the Avon.

“Turning a corner of the house I came upon the smallest of the Miss Whins and a small servant going into what seemed to be a cellar. The maid held a lantern, and little Miss Whin was about to put her flat

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little foot on the threshold when she turned and saw me.

“ ‘You must have a fine store-room there,’ I said.

“ ‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘finer than one would think. Would you care to look at it?’

“Being eager to see every part of the place, I assented. She walked first with the lantern, holding it high above her head; but this light was too feeble, while the floor of the passage we had entered was very rough, and cobwebs hung in festoons from the low, vaulted ceiling. After having gone on for a rod or so, I stopped, and remarked that it seemed to be a long way. The little woman turned and faced me, holding the lantern so that its light shone on one side of her face with a ghastly effect. Her motions were so wooden, her dress so odd, her long, white cap-strings hung in such a limp fashion, that I could not help thinking of departed nuns. An odd little feeling began to creep over me as she told me that we were in an underground passage leading to Warwick Castle, or, as some said, to Kenilworth. She looked so uncanny that I wondered if she had never married because,

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perhaps, she was courted by the spirits of departed monks and dared not wed the living.

“Such were my first impressions of Miss Eliza Whin, ‘who attended to the business part.’ Miss Ellen, ‘who attended to the cooking part,’ amused me more than her sister, for Miss Ellen gives such a funny little wink and a toss of her head in speaking. She also has clothes dating about fifty years back, but her costume, I regret to say, is less neat than Miss Eliza’s, and her cap looks as though she had stolen it from a monkey or had had it made for a fancy dress ball many years ago and forgotten to take it off ever since, only making the surrounding hair very smooth with some kind of grease each morning. Imagine a cap in the shape of a doughnut, made of black velvet and dull beads and worn very much on one side!

“At about eleven o’clock each morning I call on her in the kitchen to give the orders for the day. She makes an attempt to rise when I enter, but, being too fat, gives it up and settles herself to listen, playing a fandango with her fingers on the nearest table, to signify that she is all attention. At my

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first words the scullery-maid, Mary, turns upon us with her mouth wide open, and in this attitude continues to stare until I have finished; then shuts her mouth with a snap and goes on with her work as though nothing had happened. If Miss Ellen catches her behaving in this way, with a majestic wave of the hand she motions to Mary, whose mouth closes at the signal. Miss Ellen, you see, respects herself. Sometimes, with many winks and sighs from her heavy chest, she tells me of days gone by when she and her sister used to 'flit' upon the lawn in white muslin gowns. The mere idea of Miss Ellen flitting is so droll that it is with difficulty that I keep a straight face; but I am sure Miss Ellen herself cherishes the hope of flitting again at some future day. She regards her surroundings, even in the kitchen, as rather remarkable than otherwise, and will point with a greasy fork to a fine oak sideboard, despoiled of its brass handles, and toss her head to show that she looks upon such old curiosities as mere nothings to herself, although important to the rest of the world.

“ ‘Good morning, Miss Ellen,’ I say, on entering the kitchen.

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“ ‘And good morning to you, Mrs. Upton.’

“ ‘Miss Ellen, I thought I would send in a nice duck for dinner. I wonder whether you can dress it as I like it.’

“ ‘She smacks her lips, and her fingers turn to imaginary duck-stuffing as she answers: ‘Oh, yes, indeed! A bit of passely, an idea of onion, may happen a roasted biscuit or two—a nice sass,’ and she ends with a knowing wink.

“ ‘Fruit to be found in the market, I suppose, Miss Ellen?’

“ ‘Heaps, heaps, heaps; but our garden is so full that we will supply you most readily any time.’ This sounds like the offer of fruit and friendship.

“ ‘That will be nice, Miss Ellen.’

“ ‘Oh! yes; I will tell the gardener to knock down some Victoria plums from the south wall for luncheon.’

“ ‘As I go away after this gracious talk, I hear her calling ‘James! James!’ Now, James is her brother, and she knows that I know it, so she does not mean to deceive me in calling him the gardener. That is just her harmless way of trying to be grand.

“ ‘At first we were not much troubled by

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ghosts, although at night when the moon would shine on the great trees on the lawn I would seem to see misty shadows flit (to borrow Miss Whin's word) from time to time among them; and, after I had gone to bed and drawn all the eight yellow damask curtains close, strange sounds would be heard, as though monks were softly passing to and fro in the long corridors, telling their beads.

“Three days after my arrival Miss Eliza showed me the room adjoining mine and separated, as I have said, by a door which was always locked. As though to emphasize the fact that this door *was* securely locked, she did not try to open it, but led me downstairs and then up again by a different flight to the room in question. It was really an interesting old place, like a curiosity shop in perfect order; yet I could not help noticing that the various articles of furniture were placed as though actually in use, and that was rather a ghostly suggestion. Tapestry representing a black Queen of Sheba and a negroid Cleopatra, with a yellow Solomon and a brown Antony, covered the walls; there were some very fine old carved chairs and tables,

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a spinet, odd-looking oak chests, and valuable bits of old china, with other more ordinary furniture. The lattice windows admitted but little light, and as Miss Whin led me before a curtain which hung across the door of a closet, I was obliged to screw up my eyes to see what was in front of me. She laughed as she put her hand on the curtain and said she would show me the only inhabitant of the room and the guardian of the house. Then she drew aside the curtain, and I—screamed.

“There in his cell sat a monk, leaning over a table on which were a metal lamp and a crucifix. It was the most natural looking figure, not a bit more wooden in appearance than Miss Eliza herself. This, then, was the image of Miss Eliza’s ghostly lover, I thought; and just then, as though she knew what was passing in my brain, she said: ‘He never wakes at night and walks, so don’t be startled.’ But I confess that the thought of having these exceedingly odd things in the room next to mine was anything but pleasant.

“A few days after this I went downstairs as usual to give my orders for dinner and so forth. It being just a week since our arrival,

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I wanted to pay the accounts, and said so to Miss Ellen; but she greeted me with many winks and nods, saying: 'No hurry, no hurry, Mrs. Upton; not the least in the world,' quite as though I had been owing her for months and she was an amiable landlady. 'And besides,' she added, 'you must please have these little business affairs with my sister. She, being a teacher, you know' (I had not heard of that before) 'always attends to that part, and I, as you see, superintend the house.' While speaking she was superintending the house by sitting almost on top of the fire and stirring something in an iron pot. It was hard not to laugh, but I kept a grave face and asked if I might see her sister.

" 'I do not know,' she said, 'but will see. I fear, however, that the school is in at lessons.' With some difficulty she got upon her feet, walked across the room, and knocked at a door that I had never before noticed. I was much surprised to learn that there was a school in the house, never having seen any sign of such a thing, and I did not like finding that new door. It seemed as though I was always finding new doors.

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“In answer to Miss Ellen’s knock Miss Eliza appeared, with an angry look on her face, and reproved her sister for ‘knocking at the school-room door during study hours.’ But on seeing me and learning my errand she changed her expression and invited me to enter, which I did, looking around me for the school-children. I could only see one miserably thin little girl about seven years of age, sitting at a very old dirty desk. Her face almost touched her copy-book, and she seemed to be writing with her tongue as much as with the pencil.

“ ‘I will just send the school out of doors for a little fresh air and attend to you, Mrs. Upton, at once,’ said Miss Eliza. Turning to the child, she observed in a very serious way, ‘The school may go out and run a bit;’ at which words the little creature gave a ghostly smile and stole shyly away, after putting up her heavy stained old books into the stained old desk. When she had gone Miss Eliza remarked to me that it was a fine day.

“ ‘Yes,’ I said; ‘and it will do that child good to get out of doors. Have you many other scholars?’

“ ‘No,’ Miss Eliza answered, ‘I have only

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Kate, as you saw. She lives with us, you know.'

"It was too absurd! The school, then, consisted of this one little girl. Many times since I have seen 'the school' disporting her thin legs on the lawn in a spectral attempt to play nineteenth century games in a sixteenth century garden.

"Now you know the people who are always here, and I shall end the list with a sewing-woman who comes to St. John's House now and then to work on my dresses. Her name is Huckings (she says 'Uckings'), and she is a plump person about thirty years old, with the heart of a child. One day she startled me by asking whether I was not afraid of stopping at St. John's. I said 'no,' but began to feel rather queer as I asked her why I should be afraid.

" 'Oh,' she answered, 'because they do say as 'ow it's 'aunted, Mrs. Upton.'

" 'In what way?'

" 'There be 'eaps of stories as 'ow the boys, them as used to be at school 'ere in the 'ouse, says their prayers backward at midnight, and the monks do walk about so light' (as though they were in procession before us)—'so light you 'ardly 'ear them.'

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“ ‘But, Huckings, the Miss Whins deny that the house is haunted at all, and as they have lived here for more than half a century they ought to know.’

“ ‘Oh, dear,’ she replied, mildly, ‘they would not give hin to it, don’t you see, Mrs. Upton, for the reputation of the ’ouse would be ruined, like, as would n/ever do for letting apartments. And some in the town do say as ’ow Miss Whins are friends, like, with the ghosts, and set hup at night a-laughing and a-joking of them.’

“ ‘Huckings!’ I said, ‘you frighten me almost to death.’

“ ‘I *ham* sorry, mum’ (she looked alarmed in reality) ‘if I ’ave made you feel uncomfortable; but, if I do say it, I would not live ’ere did they pay me hever so much. It must be ’orrid at night’ (with a visible shiver). ‘On New Year’s eve the monks sing in chorus so loud as you can ’ear them from the gates yonder.’

“ ‘This is awful,’ I said; still I was fascinated and begged her to go on—which she did with a vengeance, telling me of a lady for whom she used to sew in the same suite of apartments, who was obliged to move, as the monks were rude enough to pull aside

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the bed curtains one night and laugh at her. The lady objected to this performance, partly because she could see the lining of the back of their black robes by looking at their belts, which was all very transparent, airy and unique, but unpleasant.

“ ‘The monks steals hup and down stairs,’ Huckings continued, ‘at about hevening meal-time, with flasks of wine under their harms, going to and from the cellar, you know, ’m, just as they hused to; and that is why mother will always come to fetch me ’ome.’

“ ‘The most amusing feature of Huckings’ stories is that she speaks as though she herself had lived many centuries ago, and had seen and known intimately all the things and people she tells me about, or as though these people might at any time be met walking in the streets of Warwick. ‘Do you know Guy’s Cliff, mum?’ she once asked me. (Guy’s Cliff, you know, is only a mile or so from St. John’s.) ‘Is it not just like the hold stories, Mrs. Upton, and would you believe it could have kept so well?

“ ‘It was built, oh, now let me see’ (thinking profoundly) ‘eight or seven cen-

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turies ago—I forget which. And I do so like that real story about it, Mrs. Upton.’

“ ‘What is the story, Huckings?’

“ ‘Oh! don’t you know about Sir Guy and Fair Phyllis? You must know it, Mrs. Upton, honly as ’ow you ’ave forgotten it, maybe. Why, Fair Phyllis was a beautiful young lady, very slender, with a fine figure and ’air that was so fair—you can ’ardly believe ’ow fair it was, Mrs. Upton. Her heyes were blue and her skin was as white as this dress, and that was why she was called Fair Phyllis, you see. Sir Guy ’e lived in the neighborhood. ’E was a Warwick, you know, Mrs. Upton; but ’e was such a monster! ’E was that tall, if you met ’im in the street you couldn’t ’elp but take notice of ’im. It seems as ’ow ’e took a great fancy to Fair Phyllis, and she just couldn’t abide ’im, for hall ’e said to ’er; but anyway she married ’im, and, do you know, Mrs. Upton, they ’ad not been married long before ’e went away from ’er because ’e couldn’t ’elp seeing her dislike. Well, it nearly broke ’is ’art to go, but ’e did. I call that real brave, now, don’t you, Mrs. Upton? And as ’e was going she gave ’im a ring and told ’im as ’ow ’e was

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to send it 'er if hever 'e was very bad. She staid and lived in that grand old place, Guy's Cliff. But 'e loved 'er so much 'e could not go far, so 'e 'id 'imself in a great, large rock with honly one faithful servant, and would slide hout at night and go to peep at the Fair Phyllis when she wasn't looking. You see I am honly giving you the hidea, like, Mrs. Upton. Any 'ow 'e did 'ave a bad turn, and thought as 'ow 'e was going to die; so 'e sent 'is man-servant to Fair Phyllis with the ring, which brought 'er quicker nor you would 'ave thought, for she 'ad been growing fond of 'im in the meantime, do you see, Mrs. Upton; and she fetched 'im away to Guy's Cliff and nursed 'im until 'e died, taking *such* good care of 'im.'

"She paused for a little, and then concluded with that inevitable 'They do say 'is ghost is 'overing about still.'

"Such simple faith is delightful, you may say; but what will you say when I tell you that I myself have become equally superstitious? Such is the truth, I must confess. Listen!

"One afternoon, at about three o'clock, I went into my room and prepared to lie

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down and make myself comfortable for an hour or so with a book. I was standing by the sofa, spreading a shawl, when I was startled by the sound of dripping water. Turning my head in the direction of the sound, I saw a tumbler of water which was on the washstand, about eight feet from me, lean gradually over, letting the water run out until it was quite empty, and then quietly stand back again in place as though it had not moved. It was as though an invisible hand had turned it, and I gave a piercing shriek, which, however, brought nobody, for the house seemed to be deserted. A few minutes later I was ashamed of myself and ready to disbelieve my eyes; but there was the empty glass in its place, and the water spilled over the washstand and dripping to the floor.

“Again, yesterday evening, I was still more thoroughly startled. It was about six o’clock, and I was dressing for dinner, with nurse to help me, when I happened to look toward the door leading into the ‘tapestry room’—for so I call the adjoining room with the figure of St. John, the antique furniture, and tapestry representing Cleopatra and the Queen of Sheba. I

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thought there was an eye peering in at me. I screamed and ran to nurse, pointing at the door and crying, 'Look, nurse, there is some stranger in the tapestry room who is looking in here through the keyhole!' She did not see the eye, as it vanished at my scream; but a moment afterward she ran to the door and covered the keyhole with her hand, saying: 'It is there again, mum. I never saw such impertinence!' I said in a loud voice, for the benefit of the intruder: 'Call to Miss Whin, nurse, and ask her to have it stopped;' then, making a great effort, I went to the door, pushed aside nurse's hand, put my head to the keyhole, and met the eye at close quarters. It was intensely black and perhaps rather unnaturally round, as though the lid had been drawn back by a finger. I began beating at the door with my hands, crying indignantly: 'Miss Whin, will you be kind enough to request your visitors not to look into my room?' But no answer came. In fact, I had by this time noticed that there had been no noise in the room, as there certainly would have been if visitors had come in to see the old furniture.

"My next thought was that the intruder might be a thief, and I hurried on my dress-

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ing-gown and flew downstairs. There, in the kitchen, I found both the Miss Whins, the school, and one maid, while the other maid was in sight, washing clothes in the courtyard, and the only remaining occupant of St. John's, the gardener, was bringing in a basketful of famous green gooseberries. The Miss Whins rose hurriedly when I told them what I had seen, although they protested that it must be a mistake, as they themselves had the keys to the upper and lower doors of that part of the building, and no one had been there since noon.

“But while this protestation was going on we also were moving forward, the maids, the Misses Whin, their gardener-brother, the school, and I, and presently we reached the door at the foot of the stairs which led to the tapestry room. This door was locked and bolted on the outside. The fastenings undone, we were soon on our way up, finding each door locked, and everything in the tapestry room itself undisturbed. Then I was obliged to admit that no one could have escaped from such a secure place in so short a time. In blank amazement I looked at the Misses Whin, the gardener, the maids and the school.

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“ ‘It was the ghost of St. John,’ I said, and took to my heels—which is a hard thing to do when one is wearing French slippers.

“I fled along the way we had come until I had escaped from the sound of their laughter—most disquieting and mirthless laughter, I thought it.

“But such disquieting and mirthless laughter seemed to fill the house. It followed me along the hallway and up the winding staircase to my own quarters; and at each of the innumerable doors I passed it seemed to come from within, and the round black eye seemed to peer at me from the walls. I was glad when at last I reached my own room, where I found nurse stuffing up the keyhole with paper.”

XVIII

The Match-Making Ghosts

"If I were not too ugly for any fine woman to look at!" cried Mr. Langdon, when he had read these letters.

Presently he added, "And too poor!"

Then he read them through once more.

"Very long, and most carefully written," he commented. "Must have taken hours. Now, why should she give up hours of her time to me? I know that I should not be likely to do such a thing for anybody—unless, of course, I happened to be in love with my correspondent. But, then, she is so different. That's the trouble; there are so many points of difference between us. A poor, plain old bachelor is no match for this brilliant and handsome widow. Pshaw! I have seen a peacock spread his tail after he has been moulting and has only three or four feathers left—spreading those four feathers ridiculously. That is the way I'd look if I should try to attract Hilda Upton.

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But what an irresistible description she has made! It does seem as though she must have wanted me to come."

Thus Mr. Langdon at London was engaged in a conflict with new but not wholly disagreeable emotions. Inclination said: "Go to Warwick immediately;" his habitual diffidence prompted: "It would do no good. I might as well stay here and read." And habit would have prevailed, no doubt, if it had not been for the ghosts.

"But that is too absurd, you know—about those ghosts," said Mr. Langdon to himself, as he began to pack. "I really *ought* to go. It is almost a duty. And I intend when I arrive to point out some natural explanation of the strange sights and sounds."

As though he would have a chance to point out things! Mrs. Upton took care of that. She drove him along the most beautiful roads in the Midland counties, between fields where yokels were "pay-pucking" (picking peas); by quiet streams, where one angler would call out to another, "'Arry, 'ere's yure rud'" (Harry, here is your rod), to the delight of her philologist. And think what alluring opportunities for

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research she suggested to her student of history and literature when she told him that at one period, perhaps in the sixteenth century, the inferior portions of St. John's House were used for the reception and entertainment of poor travelers—i. e., peddlers and jugglers and mountebanks and such people, who might happen to be overtaken by night outside of the city walls and after the city gates were closed. This merriest class in all England, when England was most merry, could find shelter in the extra-mural home of the holy order of St. John, so hither they came and cracked their rough jokes and sang their songs. St. John's House may therefore have been a kind of tavern during the years which young Will Shakespeare passed, a few miles lower on the Avon, studying low life at the Stratford pot-houses. It is just an easy walk from Stratford-on-Avon to Warwick-on-Avon; so the merry tinker who at noon emptied his tankard of home-brewed and sang his songs in the poet's company, may at night have brawled and roared the same verses here in the cellar of St. John's House.

“I only wish I might hear St. John sing

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those verses," cried Mr. Langdon. "I have so often wondered what tunes they were set to; and I am persuaded that some of Shakespeare's clowns' songs, which are dull reading, were inserted just because they had a wondrous merry fetching air that sang itself and dragged the heavy words into favor."

"Perhaps you will hear those songs some night," said Mrs. Upton, quite gravely.

"Oh, well, of course, I didn't mean just that," he explained.

"You don't believe in the ghost of St. John, or in any ghosts whatever?" Mrs. Upton asked, still more gravely.

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Langdon.

That, however, was in the afternoon. He had the most agreeable reason to change his opinion in the course of the evening.

Now, let us go, as softly as the spectral monks themselves, into the room where he is sitting, late at night, and let us read his thoughts.

"I intended when I arrived to point out some natural explanation of the strange sights and sounds" — thus his thoughts may be expressed. "She, however, showed no interest in the explanations I offered.

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She seems positively to like the mystery and to like surrendering herself to it in my company, taking me to see the suspected places after dark yesterday evening and again to-night, and inviting me to use her sitting-room, as I am now doing, instead of going downstairs to my own; for she was so kind as to say she felt more secure when she had me within call.

“I don’t believe she would have asked me to stay here unless she had been much frightened by what occurred just now. There we were in the garden together, watching the effects of light and shade, as the moon gradually rose above St. John’s, when she suddenly clutched my arm with one hand and with the other pointed to the window of this room in which I am now sitting.

“ ‘Do you see it? There! *there!*’

“ ‘No,’ I was obliged to confess, ‘I see nothing in particular;’ but I was heartily glad her eyes were sharper than mine, for in her fear she kept her hand on my arm and let me support her in a position which I should have thought quite impossible. I never dared to hope for such luck. It is

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easier to believe in the ghosts than to believe I am really so lucky.

“It appears she saw a figure, like the figure of St. John, pass behind this window, or saw a shadow from the waving masses of ivy that hang above this window—no matter which. At any rate, she seemed unnerved, and leaned heavily on me and spoke to me in a delightfully confidential whisper as we went toward the house, and said good night in a lingering way.

“Now, what is the meaning of all this? It is surely incredible that a fine woman should take so much trouble for me—should care for me.”

We realize that a thing is incredible when we are asked to believe in it; so Mr. Langdon was finally aware that he had been invited to believe that Mrs. Upton cared for him. But he could not bear to put it so plainly as this to himself. He thought: “I might make this matter of ghosts the subject of a good deal of study—a great deal of study.”

In Italy

XIX

Italian Courtesy

Less than nineteen hundred years ago, but nearer the time of Christ's death than of our life to-day, a Latin baby took her first walk in the open air, out and away under the olive trees that surrounded her father's house. It was the earliest warm day of her second year. "The ground was so dry now," her nurse had said—saying this in corrupt Latin—"that Naia might be allowed to put in practice the lessons she had received when, in-doors, through the inclement months that had passed, she balanced on incautious legs." So nurse and Naia went out together, prattling corrupt Latin, both of them, but one with a babyish difference; and they went hand in hand, until, in a moment when the nurse's hand relaxed its slight grasp, Naia started away alone in her earliest freedom, for her first adventure, with her first self-assertion; doing with joy unspeakable the first thing

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she had ever done, having all the world before her, for her own sake; all her kindling desire carrying her out among these things so wholly new, so entrancing; away, until she fell—beating heart and flushed cheek pressed against the warm bosom of the earth.

There was only one experience more beautiful than this in Naia's life. That was when the story of Christ's life came to her, years afterward. The story which was against all authority come from the center of persecution, stealing its way along, insisting that it should be heard, yet fearful lest it should be overheard, bringing a deadly message of freedom. The slave woman who had led Naia out under the olive trees when she was a child, told her in secret the story of Christ.

Then another new world, more lovely and alluring and more unlimited than the earth had seemed, lay open before Naia. Again she started away alone, in her earliest freedom of the spirit, in childish confidence and with joy unspeakable, doing unto others the first things she had ever done, with all the hopeless world before her, for Christ's sake; all her kindling desire carrying her

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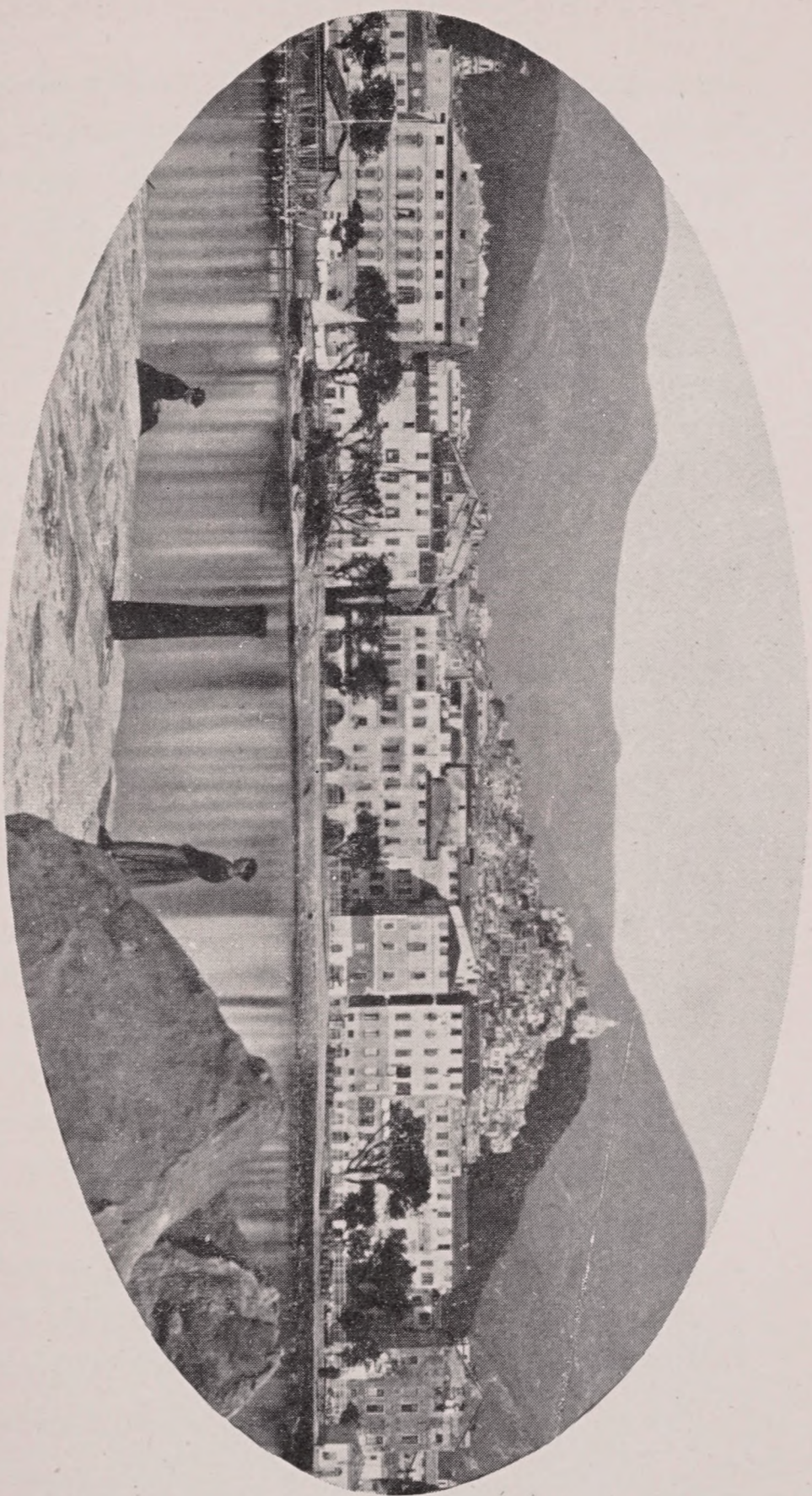
out and away from security in the old faith to martyrdom in the confession of the new. But it would be impossible to think of her fate as a dark tragedy. It has never seemed more distressing than as though a child had fallen painlessly to the earth; and at least one valley of Liguria has her still as its patroness, its patron saint, a present and a healing influence. There she is still Our Lady of the Valley, who may be seen in her white stone church half-way up the steep eastern slope.

It is a valley that the soft beauty of the Mediterranean Sea would seem to have compelled from the rugged Maritime Alps; it sets inward and northward so bravely, carpeted with violets and vines; and its red wine has a fugitive perfume stolen from violets. There is a stream down the centre, crossed by a Roman bridge. The converging hills on either side are very high, and are terraced half-way up, showing even lines of masonry and gray-green olive trees; then above the olives are bleak walls of rock, cliffs, and such impassable things. You may walk away from the violets up to the snow line and bitter winds, if you have good legs, in half an hour. The north

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wind leaps from that barrier, and falls upon the sea a whole league from shore; you may see the white caps out there. One is the more secure, by contrast, in the valley. And one is most secure, they say, by reason of Our Lady of the Valley, who looks mildly down from her white stone church, built near the upper boundary of the belt of olives on the eastern side.

A miracle-working picture makes Our Lady of the Valley visible to those who come in sorrow, with prayers for sick friends. One day Vincent came from San Remo, coming on foot, as a pilgrim should; and, having hours of leisure in the middle of the day, he was tempted to follow the stream upward to the point at which it entered the valley through a gorge, where the air itself was held still, and the light falling through it at mid-day was golden. The stream of water, white with froth and spray—and as though with fear when it came to the brink—fell over a dull brown cliff, and falling, falling, until it was nothing but froth and spray, came to its confident self again at the bottom of the gorge, and moved away southward between steep dull brown walls of rock. And the gorge



SAN REMO

ITALIAN COURTESY

was so narrow that the sunlight, pouring over its edges, and falling, falling, seemed to be pressed together and to become heavier in descent, even as the water of the stream became lighter. At the bottom the white stream received all the light, and in the silence of that lonely place there was really nothing but a stream of white water and a stream of golden light, that moved away between near dull cliffs toward the valley and the Mediterranean Sea. But presently came a shadow that slid and slipped along over the surface of the stream of water, and showed for an instant, with sudden increase, on the side of the gorge, and again slipped back and slid, circling, crossing, hiding, reappearing, searching, seeking. For there was a great bird soaring on steady pinions between the sun and the gorge. At high noon the sun looked in upon the stream between the cliffs, and saw, what it made, the shadow of an eagle which seemed to be nearer to the sun than to the earth—but only while the morning hesitated to become afternoon. Then the shadow hid itself in a tuft of gray brush that grew at the foot of the cliff; the great bird had darted southward.

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Under the gray brush and dry leaves, where the shadow disappeared, there was a small bed of a pink-tipped flower. So the shadow, in delicate representation of Naia's death, had been looking for the flower.

Such significance in things that are commonly unremarked, Vincent found in the whole valley. The day was perfect, and a perfect day in the Riviera makes strange things possible. And when he stood before the miracle-working picture of Our Lady of the Valley, it scarcely seemed an impertinence that the old fellow who opened the church for him and drew aside the curtain that hid the picture asked:

"Are you married?" (The idiom let him ask it more politely.)

"Yes," said Vincent. He looked at the painting with disappointment, for its workmanship was hardly above mediocrity, although it represented a very sweet and noble face that had been young when the Christian era was young, and had never grown old.

"And you have children, sir?"

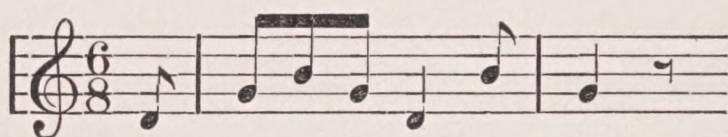
Vincent said that he had a daughter at the Villa Mora in San Remo, and with a friendly impulse he mentioned her name.

ITALIAN COURTESY

“Eh? . . . Ah!” said the old fellow. He went nearer to the painting, and crossed himself; and then he spoke the courteous word: “Your wife and child, sir—if they are ever sick, you will bring them here to be cured?—to please Our Lady—for *Her* sake.”

XX

A Bare Head in Liguria



These notes of the bugle sound the evening summons (the *ritirata* they call it in Italy) from the barracks.

Some high white walls still gleam in sunshine, but there is deep shade in the narrow, crooked streets of San Remo.

For the very reason that the day's work is over, it is a stirring hour. Villagers are going away, going up the steep paths that lead from town to their homes among the foothills of the Maritime Alps, driving their mules before them with sarcastic words of love. In Vittorio Emanuele Street shopkeepers are "putting the head out for a breath," as they say, which means that they stand in the doorways to gossip with neighbors expansively, after the narrowing effects

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of a day spent in trade. The poorest people—so poor that they economize even their indulgence in church-going—are on their way to or from “a little prayer.” Officers of the *Bersaglieri* strut along by twos and threes, with some unavoidable noise of swords and spurs, as they come from the promenade. Their fatigue caps are tilted forward and almost rest upon their noses, yet they succeed in eyeing the women. Past the chattering dealer in mosaics, past the embroidery shop and the jeweler’s, these handsome fellows go until they reach a café, where they seat themselves at small tables that stand on the sidewalk. Common soldiers of the same regiment, with cock-feather plumes waving from wide-brimmed hats, and shaken rhythmically in time to vigorous short steps, hurry along toward the barracks at the sound of the *ritirata*.

From the lower window of a house in the old quarter a girl is leaning. Below, in the street, stands a soldier. He is begging for the flower she holds between her white teeth. In the opposite doorway are two women watching the courtship. One of these women holds in her arms a baby who is crying lustily, while the mother lets it

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make playthings of her long ear-rings, hoping thus to quiet it in order that she may hear what her pretty neighbor is saying to the *Bersagliere*.

"Why do you want my rose?" asks the girl at the window.

"To keep as a souvenir of your lovely face," is the answer. "Give it to me, *gioja bella*."

"Do not listen to him, Marianna," the motherly neighbor interrupts. "They are all alike—those soldiers!" She sways from side to side to quiet her child. "I remember when I was young. Ah, those cock's feathers have brushed many a cheek, believe me. Keep to your town sweethearts, I say. They are steady, while these sharpshooters are always on the march."

At the same moment the *ritirata* sounds again. "*Ecco!*" the woman exclaims conclusively. "Did I not tell you so?" she urges, as the soldier turns his face barrackward and begins to run, calling back over his shoulder: "*Addio! addio!* I shall come to-morrow to beg it from your lips, sweet Marianna. Do not listen to that woman!"

While the three neighbors join in easy

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laughter the soldier disappears; and then that frankness in regard to love affairs that characterizes Italians of all classes has free play.

"Marta, you are a very witch!" her companion exclaims. "You must have been in league with the devil to have made the *ritirata* sound at your words." Here they all laugh again, and there appears at Marta's door a stout man with a pipe in his mouth and yellow slippers on his feet.

"The joke, the joke," he cries. "Let me laugh also,"—taking the child from his wife's arms.

Marianna explains: "Friend Pietro, your Marta is a dangerous woman for young girls to have near; she sends their sweethearts about-face too quickly,"—smiling as she twirls the flower in her brown hands.

"No, no, little one," the good woman protests, advancing to the window, her strong soft arms akimbo. "I speak to you in earnest. Your Giulio, down in the town, earning his money daily, is worth a whole dozen *soldati*. This other fine fellow, with his white gaiters, his plumes, and his Neapolitan tongue, is just a rogue like all his comrades. He has a sweetheart at Bordighera, Ospeda-

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letti, Colla, and every town within running distance. They always have. 'Twould be a pity to match your good dowry and household linen against a handsome face and a penny a day—eh? . . . Ah!"

"You speak truly," the young girl admits, still twirling the flower and looking down at it to keep her friends (quick readers of every expression) from seeing her eyes. How that rose, for which only a moment before he had been pleading, now pleads for him—recalling his presence, his flattering words. And, even more persuasive than his smooth Southern tongue, his ardent Southern glance—how hard *its* pleading—with only a penny a day! A sigh almost escapes her lips, but is retained in the full bodice, for now Pietro is speaking like an echo of common-sense.

"Yes, yes," he says, "a penny a day is the soldier's pay. A fine house with his wife's money, while he marches away to make love in the next town. You are right, Marta, you are right."

"And it is always money for tobacco," chimes in Marta's companion, who is too fat for many words, but is considered an amiable conversationalist, inasmuch as she

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nods her head approvingly at all her neighbors' sayings. "Soon the soup goes, and only the herbs remain on the cold stove."

When her friends return slowly to their respective doorsteps, Marianna is herself again. The idea of nothing but herbs, sweethearts in other towns, and money for tobacco which is not tobacco, appeals to the chief Ligurian virtues; and she arranges her thick glossy hair in soft curls before the little mirror in her bedroom, making ready to go with her friend Lucia to meet Giulio, the wood-carver, on his way home from the town below.

The market-place in San Remo is a large, irregular, roughly-paved square, with a fountain and several trees in the centre. Its narrow outlets are the dark over-arched alleys of the old jammed-together quarter where the right of way is freely and frankly accorded to the donkey. As for that stubborn loiterer, the stolid expression of his grave face says unmistakably that this part of town he considers his domain, and by his half-closed eyes he shows that he does not mean to treat you here as he is obliged to treat you on the fine new promenade, where his life is made a burden by shouts, kicks,

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and cracking and lashing of whips, forcing him to the right or to the left. "Now and here," he seems to say to the human animal, "*you* will turn aside, if you please."

The buildings that line the market-place are held at a high price, for their indwellers realize that their value increases from trading generation unto trading generation, and assert that nothing less than an earthquake can dislodge them. Then, too, the church which almost fills the upper side of the place—the principal church in which the most interesting civic events connected with birth, marriage, and death are celebrated—is a consideration not less real than the advantage of being always under shelter of one's own house on market days.

Between six and eleven o'clock in the morning, the market-place is alive with undressed good-nature. In the matter of little clothing the Ligurian women are always suspects: the mule-drivers' sashes have a more coming-off effect here than when seen elsewhere; ragged children abound; officers and soldiers, home from an early march, are covered with dust and otherwise not coated; military body-servants in shirt sleeves are drawing water at the

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hydrants for their masters' toilet; each one excusing his appearance to all the rest, and all the rest politely (and self-consciously) accepting the excuses offered.

As the large church clock strikes eleven, Marianna, in her short skirts, which show her neat shoes and a bit of white stocking, appears in the market-place. The smooth coils of her well-dressed hair shine in the sun, a soft shawl is folded over her bosom, and all about her is that mellowness which the Italian climate lends to its women for a few years of maturity before it begins to dry them like plump grapes which are to be raisins. On her arm she carries a small basket, the position of which she changes frequently in order to hold her elbows close to her side and thereby keep the shawl in place. Although her head is bent, her eyes scan the groups of townspeople inquiringly.

"*Ecco, Marianna,*" a little old woman calls out from under a big red umbrella. "Are you looking for *mammam*? It is but one-half minute since she left her market-basket at the church door and passed in with her mistress."

Marianna's mother (the *mammam* referred to) is cook at the Villa Mora; and as her

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wages are thus adapted to the princely foreign standard in such matters, being eighty lire per month, with many perquisites, she has been able to put aside for her daughter a dowry which all envy, admire, or covet, according to temperament and sex. Out of her earnings this good Tommasina has also bought what she terms a *baracca*, which is a tiny house on a grape-growing strip of land, far up on the mountain side. This bit of land is cultivated by Tommasina's one-eyed husband, and, in addition to the wine, it produces many vegetables. In winter the man lodges in two rooms with his daughter in the town, where Marianna cooks and sews for him, and makes lace when she has time.

"My husband," Tommasina has been heard to say, "because of his blindness in one eye, is only fit to help me at the villa during the winter, blacking shoes, pumping water, running errands, and attending strictly to church days, as I am unable to do so myself." Her church time she is obliged to use, she says, "for the benefit of her family,"—which means going the rounds of shops where Vincent pays his bills at irregular intervals for provisions sent to the

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villa, and where she as irregularly receives her percentage and reward for uncritical patronage; or perhaps, for the benefit of her family, she has only to sell back wine bottles to the merchants who supply the villa. At any rate, her church time is all used up, and her husband is required to "attend strictly." But now at last she has actually come to church as well as to market in the course of duty, in attendance upon her mistress.

Marianna thanks the little market woman for her information, and presently stands before the stuccoed edifice in which Ligurians confess and pray after selling and buying. At the entrance she searches for her mother's well-known head-basket among the many overflowing panniers that line the vestibule walls. Only one donkey is hitched in the vestibule, where iron rings fastened to the stonework offer accommodation for a number; he stands waiting for some worshipping master, and exposed to sore temptation amid these heaps of green vegetables and fruit, with lettuce leaves on top. Marianna makes her way into the church, and then it needs but a minute to touch forehead and breast with holy water, to accus-

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tom her eyes to the dim light, and to discover her mother in the half-filled building.

Tommasina is doing the honors of the church to her mistress by bringing a camp-chair and placing it quite near the altar for the lady, after which she herself falls on her knees on the bare stones. Evidently she feels at home here, with all the Italian peasant's homely proprietary sense—as though it were just her house, her finer house, of which her little *baracca* up among the vines and olives might be called the humble annex.

Now the priest is making the memento for the dead, standing in silence with hands joined before his breast. Only a slender golden bar is shot across this mystic light from all the glare of sunshine in the market-place. On the uplifted faces of the worshipers one reads forgetfulness of the body. But no sooner has the holy bread been taken than there is a stir, a careless moving about, a shuffling of chairs and feet, and the most of those present commence making their way slowly toward the door. Marianna puts her hand on her mother's arm.

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“Ah, little one, what are you doing here?”

“I have to buy fish for dinner,” Marianna replies, dropping a courtesy to Gloria and with the others they come out into the bright sunlight. Souls seem to have been left behind in the incense of the church, but to the genial warmth outside hearts respond—especially Marianna’s, as she catches sight of a dark face smiling beneath cock’s feathers. Tommasina does not see the nod of recognition; but after her basket has been found and firmly planted on her head she looks around for her daughter, who at that instant happens to make a little warning sign for the benefit of the *Bersagliere*, to let him know that the time is not propitious. Tommasina excuses herself to her mistress and catches Marianna by the shoulder.

“Who is your new friend, child?” she asks hurriedly. “A friend of your Giulio? Tell me!”

Hot blood rushes to the girl’s face. “No, mother, only a soldier from the barracks who”—hesitating—“who teases me.”

“Teases you! How? For what?”

“Oh, nothing. Just for a rose, yesterday.”

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“Teased you for roses yesterday, and is looking out for you to-day! Listen, Marianna,”—in genuine alarm. “You are a sensible girl. Remember all the years your mother, who loves you, has worked and saved for your dowry. Not a lira of it will ever go into uniform pockets! Could you live on a penny a day?” With these words she moves away to join her mistress, her head-basket shading an anxious face.

Always the same “penny a day,” Marianna thinks, as she walks quickly to the fish stall. The little fish-woman is trying to wait on all her six or seven customers at once, dealing out to this one, receiving money from another, in a whirl of trade and good nature. “I shall wait on you in two minutes by the church clock, my little Marianna,” she calls out, as the girl picks up some fresh sardines by their tails, from the bucket in which they swim.

“Do you really know how to stuff those fine fellows for dinner, pretty Marianna?” a melodious voice asks over her shoulder. The *Bersagliere* has come up behind her and looks hungrily at the sardines. “What can you not do?” he continues. “What is there about you that is not attractive? Eh!

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Tell me yourself, for I shall never discover it."

"Go and say the same thing to your sweethearts in Ospedaletti, Colla, and all the other towns within running distance," answers the girl, quoting from the advice she had received the evening before, but blushing furiously.

"Ah, gipsy that you are! to make me vow again and again that I was born blind, and only received sight on looking upon you! But tell me, who has put into your heart of gold so much lead? The one who just now took you by the shoulder? Say, is that your mother? Only show her to me again, that I may ask her to be my *mam-mam* also."

"Here, my fine bird!" interrupts the fishwife, bustling up to them and flirting his cock-feather plume with her little scaly hand, "don't waste time making pretty speeches to our Marianna. Her lover, the wood-carver, in the shop not many streets from here, will make an olivewood coffin for you, for all you are a soldier."

Nothing could please the Neapolitan better than the opportunity thus furnished him to indulge in a little blustering talk, with

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jocular reference to musket-balls and knives, making the desired impression upon the women; and truly he seems to them not less poetical than fierce when he compares Marianna's favor to the sunlight and the wood-carver to a thief, "who would keep the rays of the sun from shining on others." Then with an air of easy triumph he tells the girl that he will come for her rose at sunset.

"No, no!" says Marianna, quickly, thinking of her neighbors' disapproval. "Not there."

"Then will you walk in the public garden this evening?" He guesses the nature of her objection, and mentions the *giardino pubblico* because, when the band plays there, every one meets everybody, and lovers may come together as though by accident. "Say yes quickly; I must go," he urges, an officer appearing in the market-place.

"Yes, I am going to the music, but—" How can she tell him that it must be with Giulio? She hesitates, but he forces the favorable conclusion, and crying, "Then until to-night, *addio!*" he is gone.

"How handsome he is, eh?" Rosetta, the fish-woman, says, coming back with a

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brown paper full of sardines, which she thrusts into Marianna's basket. "I always wish I were young again when I see the soldiers. What a pity that they are so expensive to marry."

You may be sure there is a warm place for this fat little fishwife in Marianna's heart as she turns into the town. It is not yet time to cook dinner, so she can go into the shop where Lucia works for the fine milliner in the Via Vittorio Emanuele, and buy a piece of red ribbon to wear to-night. And, of course, she thinks of Giulio, too, for it has been her habit to think of him whenever she turned her face toward Vittorio Emanuele Street; and truly, she reasons with herself, ought she not to be proud of him, even if he does stoop a little from his confining work? Do not all the serious-minded girls in town envy her? But yet, but yet—it would be a fine thing to have a soldier for her husband instead of going bareheaded all her life. With pride she imagines herself walking arm-in-arm with her Neapolitan through the streets of large towns where the *Bersaglieri* would be stationed. Once away from her native place, she would wear a bonnet and jacket for the

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first time. She would then forget the days of bare head and shawl, and she would rise superior to the bareheaded peasants among whom she had lived. Her Neapolitan would think her lovely in a bonnet, accustomed as he was to women in large cities. Giulio, on the contrary, would be shocked at even the suggestion of such useless finery, such unsuitable ornaments, and would laugh her to scorn for trying to look like a "donna." "Such extravagance, too," he would be sure to say.

By this time she has come before the windows of a neat shop where every kind of ornament made from olivewood is displayed. In the doorway sits a young man bent over his work, which is a picture-frame inlaid with swallows and bars of music. His face wears an anxious look as he glances up at the sound of her step.

"Marianna."

"How pale you are. What is it?" she asks quickly.

"My mother," he begins in a broken voice as he rises and leads her into the shop. She sits on the wooden bench offered her, while he stands before her, his back to the light, trying to conceal the tears that are

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filling his eyes. This effort is made, however, solely with the purpose of saving her feelings and not because he is ashamed to show emotion.

"I have been there, at home, four times since breakfast," he continues. "It is her old pain about the heart."

"Is the pain so bad to-day?"

He does not answer directly, but looks into her eyes with an appeal for sympathy. "You know how good a mother she has always been to me, and her pain is surely my own. I must be with her whenever I can—she is so old now. Ah, little Marianna, how can I ask you to forego the pleasure of the music to-night?—for I cannot go—"

"Giulio mio," the girl replies, tenderly, springing up to put her hand before his mouth, "do not think of me for an instant. I will go to see your mother, and, if she wishes, stay with her this afternoon. I don't care a bit about the music now, and if I did Lucia might go with me."

"Really? Are you not disappointed? You sweet little girl. Take that"—kissing her—"to my mother from me."

The wood-carver's gentleness and his dis-

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tress work a momentary change of heart in the young girl; still it is with heightened color and shining eyes that she goes on her way to find Lucia, for the sympathetic pang she had felt for Giulio is forgotten in the happiness of this unexpected freedom. This one evening will be hers to enjoy in her own way. She means to give herself up to a dream for once—for just this once.

She finds Lucia at the back of a small millinery shop, with a delicate creation of tulle and flowers in her hands, to which she is just giving the finishing touches.

“Are you alone?” she asks mysteriously, and glancing quickly about.

“Yes. Where do you come from, with such a pair of cheeks?”

“Giulio will not go to the public garden to-night. Can I go with you?”

This is said so eagerly that they both laugh. Lucia understands at once, and merely asks: “At what hour shall I call for you?”

“Eight, without fail. And, Lucia, I want a bit of red ribbon for my throat.”

Lucia rises and takes down a box from the shelf. The hat she has been making is no sooner on the counter than Marianna

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takes it up, and, standing before the mirror, glancing admiringly at her reflection, turning from side to side, tempts herself. Lucia sees her and cries: "Lovely! Precious! Like a bride! Ah, what a pity that you must marry Giulio and can never wear a hat."

Marianna tears it from her head in a rage. "Why do you always remind me of this?" she demands bitterly. "Each time I come here and try on a hat you make the same remark. The only time in my life when I shall ever wear a hat is in this shop. I knew it as well as you. . . . Why not let me enjoy the thing for one minute?"

"Forgive me," Lucia says, and her professional eye rests in sorrow upon the poor head that is condemned to make an unadorned journey through life. "See," she goes on in a cooing voice, "this shade will make you lovely"—holding a piece of ribbon under her friend's chin. Marianna is propitiated, for the color is really most becoming.

And thus a fifty-franc hat (that Lucia trimmed) was the pretty devil, bringing together a bareheaded Ligurian girl and a Neapolitan soldier, and, when they were

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fast together, leaving them condemned to each other.

To be sure there was an encounter between Giulio and the Neapolitan, in which encounter the pale wood-carver was the aggressor and the sun-burned soldier cut so poor a figure that he was discharged from his regiment for cowardice. To put it plainly, he took a good beating. But although his pockets were no longer military, they never held a lira of Tommasina's savings. Then there was a short-lived attempt at gayety in Naples, where for a time Marianna wore gilt bells on her garters. But the middle of their story seems just unrelieved dull distress, in spite of the gilt bells tinkling, until the distress was unbearable; and then there came a padrone, going about as the agent of a steamship company among such people as Marianna and her husband, persuading and enabling them to emigrate to America. And finally the two immigrants, with their happiness in the past, have in their cheerless present a hand-organ which still can produce the notes of the "*Ritirata*," of the bugle-call, and of the song that begins with those notes, just as written at the head of this chapter.

A BARE HEAD IN LIGURIA

They have turned up in your street, perhaps, in the course of their wanderings; and, if so, you may have noticed that Marianna, with a tin cup for pennies in her hand, had a bright cotton handkerchief tied like a bonnet over her head and under her chin.

Well, Villa Mora was occupied by Vincent and Gloria (coming from London) one happy winter, when the little boy was having his first year at a New England school, and in his stead a still smaller girl had become the centre of their family life—the one indispensable person. And that, of course, is the reason why Marianna's story became known.

XXI

Vincent and Mademoiselle Mora

For a few weeks after their arrival in San Remo the Vincents were somewhat at the mercy of incompetent Italian coachmen—I mean the drivers of public carriages. Finally, in order to be rid of them, Vincent bought a little victoria with red wheels, and, to make these wheels spin properly, a willing young iron-gray horse of the Lombard stock. This was really on Gloria's account, for she did not care for walking, while he usually preferred walking to driving; but one day he appropriated the carriage to his own use. You see he wanted to visit Bussana, where the earthquake did so much damage in 1887, and from Bussana he thought of going on to Taggia, where good oranges and violets and excellent red wine are to be found. The distance was not great, but the day promised to be hot. Then there was the victoria standing ready at the gate. He got in.

MADEMOISELLE MORA

“To Bussana, Michele!”

“A bad road, signore,” Michele protested. He did not like going into the country, and all roads leading away from San Remo were bad roads to him. In the country there were no acquaintances of his to be saluted with a loud crack of the whip, no rival coachmen to envy this smart little carriage over which he presided.

“Never mind the road,” said Vincent; “I’d trust you to reach a place even if there were no road at all.”

Mollified by this tribute to his ability, Michele shook the reins and uttered the peculiar “Oop!”—like the cooing of a mammoth dove—that an Italian horse understands. It signifies: “Go, for the love of me, my dear; and if you don’t go, I’ll take your hide off.”

So they started at a rattling pace, which was maintained along the level highway until, with a sharp turn to the left, they began to ascend a hill which proved to be steep and rough, as Michele had said.

At the roughest point in this road, where the inhabitants of the ruined village were engaged in building new homes for themselves, they came on an old woman who

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was plodding along up the hill; so Vincent made her get in beside him, and with this strange companion to answer questions about the earthquake, paid his first visit to Bussana. Of course he supposed she would be pleased to be carried to her destination in this comfortable fashion, and perhaps still more pleased to receive a piece of silver for her services as guide; but she gave no lively evidence of satisfaction. On the contrary, she replied to inquiries as briefly as possible, and with averted face. In fact, she seemed so dull and ill at ease that he was glad to let her go as soon as they had driven into the town.

But then suddenly, after she had disappeared, she became interesting, for Michele leaned down from the box to say: "Does the signore know who that is? No? That is Mademoiselle Mora, who owns your villa. And she has other houses, too. The signore may not believe it, but she is not so old by any means as she looked. And quite handsome she is, really. She just makes up that way, and goes out to beg, although she is rich, rich, rich!"

"Nonsense, Michele!" Vincent said, as little pleased as people usually are on being

MADemoisELLE MORA

told that they have been blind to a transparent fraud.

Michele replied by pointing with his whip at one of the buildings that had been most severely dealt with by the earthquake. More than half of the entire structure had fallen to the ground. "That belongs to her also," he added, indifferently, as though he did not care how much or how little importance was attached to the statement.

XXII

The Villa and the Town

To an amiable house courtesy is easily proffered, as it is to an amiable person; and we need not content ourselves with saying that it shares the family life which it makes possible. Such a villa is not merely receptive. It has its expression, and its own point of view.

Villa Mora looked out upon the Mediterranean sea, from an olive grove above the town.

It was not at all a grand house, although to be sure an old beggar at the gate saluted Vincent with the question, "Are you the lordship of this palace?" (*Signoria di quest' palazzo?*) The garden was small, being only a narrow strip between the house and the olives, with just about room in it for a few hedges of geranium, a lot of heliotrope, half a dozen small palms with as many orange trees, and an abundance of roses. A much larger but less comfortable house,

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in which the German Prince Frederick had fought with death, was not far away. Between the two places was a narrow path leading by a flight of rough stone steps quite directly to the town; and this path, this mule path, was continued above the house, passing along by the high garden wall up the hillside. There was a mountain beyond, and still the mule path kept on—up—up—I can't say how far. Sturdy peasants clattered up and down pretty constantly, going to or from a village set back among the hills, or with baskets full of olives on their heads, or with a thin-legged ass or two carrying bales of goods and casks of wine. Many of the girls were beautiful, and altogether Vincent liked the look of the people. They were strong and brown, and polite enough, and appeared to take work and poverty with a good grace. Both men and women had a way of blending shades—or fades—of red and blue in their dress, so that if Vincent happened to lie awake at night and recall the figures he had seen during the day, it was like turning a kaleidoscope. Not that they had delicate taste in dress; rather the contrary. They bought the bright, crude colors, and then

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wore them until they had faded to soft tints. So the poorest old gowns were the prettiest, and the poorest old hag might wear the prettiest fades. Early and late and forever they would sing out-of-doors, throughout the day for their own amusement and throughout the evening for pay.* The most candid beggar among them was one of these open-air musicians—a thin man with a long, red nose, who sang “Santa Lucia,” “Funiculi, Funicula,” and such popular melodies under the Vincents’ windows, tooting between the verses on a pipe. When he had finished he sent in by the maid a written receipt, stamped and signed in due form, for the amount he expected to get. He wanted voice as well as money, that chap; but sometimes good, ringing tenors, signed and stamped by Nature, were uplifted in praise of everything Italian—from a pretty housemaid to the Vesuvian railway—all through the dinner hour. Then the Vincents gave much applause, a little silver, and perhaps a glass of wine apiece; also, if they were inferior musicians but had

*It is the climate and the scenic harmonies that make people sing in Italy. Italy composes a voice every hour, and then the voice lodges in a human throat. Sometimes a traveler will find his voice there. The Vincents found theirs—at least, they began to speak more freely, and Gloria began to sing.



VILLA MORA

THE VILLA AND THE TOWN

a revengeful look, Gloria thought she saved the household from assassination by throwing a few coppers from the windows.

Just below the Prince's villa was a highway leading to Genoa; below the highway were several hotels with large gardens; then beyond these hotels was the Mediterranean. The sound of breakers along the beach came to the villa very distinctly at all times, and with a great roar when the sea was rough. Only a few coasting-vessels with cargoes of wine visited this harbor, for it was small and shallow—its waters curiously streaked with yellow and brown and blue by the current of a stream that emptied into it. There the infrequent brigantines would be unladen behind the stone pier, bleeding fresh purple grape juice into tuns and casks, and then resting as though life had gone out of them. Women would come down to the shore carrying empty casks, form a little wrangling group around the tun last opened, and then disperse through the streets with full casks balanced on their heads—with purple lips and hands and spattered skirts. Sensuous and placid, they would carry the burden to little cabins among the olives, or disappear among the dark ways of the old town.

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The houses of the old town were so closely packed together, and so entirely haphazard were the narrow lanes in its jumbled mass, that one could not help fancying that it had extended a long way up the hillside originally, and that then the higher portion must have slipped down and jammed all together. It was a town knocked into a cocked-hat. Near the shore, however, were wide modern streets and bright shops, where Italian, French, German, and English were all spoken badly, and where representatives of the first-named nation fleeced tourists of the other three famously. Big hotels and pensions abounded there.

The old jammed part was very interesting—not so dirty as you might expect, full of color from the bright handkerchiefs and shawls and gowns and caps; also with startling effects of light and shade, where the sky at noon showed between dark, high, close-standing houses, like an open furnace door. Here and there the sky was shut out altogether, and the street became a tunnel with a dwelling above it; elsewhere arches were stretched across, as though to prevent further crowding. A great deal was done in these narrow, twisting alleys which was

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worth looking at, because one saw the whole family life so easily. If you could look right through the fronts of all the houses in an American town, you would take people off their guard to about the same extent.

Such mere naturalness had many distasteful manifestations, of course, but also many quaint and delightful sides.

For example, it was surely a form of the same simplicity that an old priest showed, one cool day. This old priest had gone with his housekeeper—a middle-aged, strong-featured woman of square figure—into a shop to buy several undershirts for himself. He wanted a good bargain, and he went about it in this way. The housekeeper was to beat the shopman down, while the reverend father looked on and decided when the right point had been reached. So these three stood together in the draper's shop—draper and servant with heads close together, yet speaking thunderously and shrilly while the priest was attentive at a slight remove.

“But I can't make it less!” cried the draper.

“Does not the Bible say, ‘Clothe the naked?’ ” the housekeeper insisted; “and

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will you let your spiritual father go unclothed, without a good warm—I mean, a flimsy, shoddy shirt like this? which is scarcely worth lugging home; but I will take them at one lira apiece.” The price was three times that much.

As the woman quoted Scripture, she referred to the priest, who nodded approval.

“You see,” she continued, “it is in the Bible. One lira each. Will you sin against the holy book? Think of this, you rich man—you, who could afford to give them for nothing. Honor thy father, and if a respectable priest is cold, clothe him, that thy days may be long. Is that not also in the Bible?” Again she appealed to her master, who nodded vigorously, but said never a word.

This was too much for the draper. It might be commanded in the Bible that one must sell underwear below cost. He did not know. The priest must know, and even his servant would naturally be better posted as to the contents of the Bible than a mere man of business.

“Let them go for one lira, then,” he said; “but don’t tell anybody.”

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There was no moral in the scene, but much Italian nature; and as at its conclusion Vincent turned away, he saw that Ravelli was also looking on with interest.

“We Ligurians are all like that,” said Ravelli.

XXIII

The High Note

“RAVELLI CAV. ALBERTO, Maestro di Musica,” was the inscription on his card. He gave Mrs. Vincent lessons in singing; that is how the acquaintance began.

Maestro Ravelli was an excellent musician, a composer of no great distinction, but fair repute; and for years he had conducted the San Remo orchestra, being employed by the town for that purpose at a salary of two thousand five hundred lire. He had had a number of grand friends and patrons, his compositions had gained first medals at Paris and Milan; so he looked up to himself with esteem. The work with the town band he regarded as unworthy of his talents—but twenty-five hundred lire! That was three-fourths of his income.

You see how trouble would be sure to arise. He wanted to retain the position, but the musicians and the mayor must know his worth. Then, too, like every

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interesting person, he had a temper. The musicians did not come up to the mark, once upon a time. Pouff! an explosion of his temper; a quarrel with the members of the band; the mayor called in to decide. Now, the mayor was a self-made man; could such a person presume to know the merits of a question of music where the maestro was a party?

Yes, the mayor did so presume, and rebuked Ravelli before his band.

“Dolt! Ass! Upstart!” such epithets as these Ravelli applied to the mayor in return for this public rebuke. And so they had it out, until the maestro swore he would not lead the orchestra again before the mayor had offered him an apology. But then San Remo might have to do without music in the public garden of an afternoon; that was unthinkable. There must be music at least three times a week, or the mayor would make himself unpopular—and election day was drawing near. But Ravelli was the only good leader on the ground.

The maestro insisted he would rather starve than sacrifice a bit of self-love. Now, this was certainly an artificial view of things, and yet as truly characteristic of people

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here as was the behavior of certain olive-gatherers who refreshed themselves with a bath in the roadway near the Vincent's villa, men and women together stripping off their clothing and throwing water over each other.

Suppose one were expressing an opinion upon manners in the Riviera. One might say the people show extreme sensitiveness and scrupulousness, insisting upon fine points of honor. That would be true. Or one might say: They have no manners; they are not even decent. That also would be true. Is it a question of class, then? Not a bit. The peasants are keen in a matter of honor; the gentry are lax where the peasants are coarse.

But if you would quickly and surely understand Ravelli's character, consider for a moment the music and the dress of these Ligurians. In the Ligurian popular songs there is sure to occur at the end of each stanza a high, long, strong note. That is the important thing—that final note. The rest of the song is but preparation for it. And so of their operatic music. Have we not all seen the tenors running across the stage on tiptoe in pursuit of high C, with

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mouth wide open to catch the note which is just beyond their reach? It is the manner of Ligurian music—this single demonstration of power.

It is also the manner of Ligurian dress. Let the hair be smartly brushed and the hat set jauntily on one side; then never mind the rest. The cheap dandy is thus put in gorgeous array. He gives himself the airs of conscious beauty, although he may be in *such* shirt sleeves. Coatless but elegant, he ogles the women on Victor Emanuel Street, and conquers as he looks.

The analogue is striking. Signor Cheapfop's high note is his hair. When he makes his toilette such details as boots and linen are hurried on, or some of them omitted. Then he elaborates his high note, and sincerely expects applause.

The manner of Ligurian music and dress is also the manner of Ligurian manners and character. These people do not show uniform considerateness, but occasional bursts of politeness, and such a sensitive nature that one wonders they can ever be brutish. You must expect from them, not high-toned manners, but high notes now and then—admirable, wonderful notes. And

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even these people I have mentioned—the peasants, the priest, the mayor—are all capable of a single demonstration of power. When they appear careless, commonplace, or silly, they are but holding in until the end of a stanza.

The strife between the mayor and Maestro Ravelli resulted in a victory for the latter, whom Gloria invited to dine at Villa Mora to celebrate this happy event; for she took much interest in the fortunes of her teacher, and contributed not a little to his success in his contest by employing him herself, speaking in his praise whenever she found opportunity, taking him with her whenever she wanted to buy music, or choose a piano—in a word, making herself his champion with equal enthusiasm and tact. Such enthusiasm on her part kept up the little man's reputation among the townspeople, and kept up his courage, too; otherwise he would probably have yielded to the entreaties of his plain, oldish, but dearly beloved wife, who begged him to make any concession and accept any terms which would keep them from starving.

Vincent suggested inviting the wife also, but was thereupon assured on the highest

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authority that Ravelli did not expect it. "As artists they might be entertained, not as mere men with wives," so the highest authority proceeded. "There was no such thing as an artist's better half. That phrase, so truly descriptive of the relative social importance of ordinary husbands and wives, was not to be used in connection with Ravelli."

Accordingly he came alone, a full hour before the other guests. Vincent heard some one playing the piano, and went curiously into the sitting-room. There was Ravelli already. "I should like to compliment you on the concert of this afternoon—the first you have conducted for ever so long," said Vincent, but Ravelli was rather conscious of a new black coat he wore, so did not understand that the compliment had reference to his orchestra, and thanked the other modestly for approval of his personal appearance. Vincent had still to dress, so begged him to make himself entirely at home, using for that purpose the Italian phrase, "*S' accomodi*," and quoting Dumas père to the effect that this signified, "Enter: you are welcome; you are the master in this house, etc."

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“No,” said the little man, “it only means ‘sit down.’ ”

At dinner he spoke with great animation on a variety of subjects, eating and drinking largely, asking the servant the name of each wine as it was passed, and especially commending one sweet dish, in regard to the merits of which he was disposed to enter into conversation with a good-looking maid, who served him repeatedly. All this with such simplicity that every one voted him a good companion on the spot.

When the ladies rose he grieved—most indubitably grieved, as though a sudden and unforeseen calamity had marred the joyous occasion. That was for an instant; the next instant, the doors having closed, he said with a sigh of deep content: “Now we are free! Now we can smoke!”

A moment later his mouth, beneath a heavy black mustache, was twisted out of shape in the effort to hold the cigar so that its smoke would not curl up into his eyes; and this distortion acted upon the other men present as a whimsical invitation to notice his strong throat—fully displayed—and prominent aquiline nose; for the rest, a sallow, worn face and long hair, bunched

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and over-abundant about the ears, but very thin above.

Fragments of conversation:—

The guests had been discussing a suggestion that Spaniards were Irish-Latins, when Ravelli interposed: "That seems to be a fruitful thought. The Italians, north of Naples, are more like English or German Latins."

Vincent referred to a letter just received from America, in which his correspondent, Mr. Taswell Langdon, had said: "Of course every good American believes in our particular variety of civilization, but I don't see how we are to acquire amenities and escape provincialism, unless a war, or some such elemental upheaval, comes to take us out of ourselves and our self-sufficiency."

Ravelli's comment was, "America and England are kings, and can do no wrong."

XXIV

The False Windows

Roses and violets were in full bloom at Christmas time; the season of figs was just passing, and the Vincents were just beginning to pick oranges. And remembering how attractive good native wine and handsome, brown-skinned native women used to seem to him and the other college boys when they agreed that the Riviera would be a good place to live in, Vincent found wine so plentiful that beer was accounted a luxury, while the women were as handsome as they were brown, and brown as they were handsome, and brown and handsome as he used to fancy, but with eyes of a new color.

So this feature and that of the actual San Remo—or rather his particular little villa near San Remo—tallied with that feature, and this of the picture his fancy had drawn. The situation was not quite ideal, of course, but nearly so. The larger elements were all

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present, and if ever he began to be dissatisfied because some detail of the wish had not been perfectly carried out—if he ever began to feel discontented—he had only to look through certain false windows in order to see the wish realized, to see the thing which did not exist. This I must explain.

You must know, then, that his house stood quite alone on the side of a rather steep hill. Back of it was the steep hillside, back of the hill a mountain, back of the mountain the North Pole. There was doubtless something between the mountain and the ultimate north, but one could not see it. On the north side the house had no windows whatever. In front and below was the town, beyond that the sea, beyond that the south. Between the sea and the ultimate south there were doubtless a great many places, but the Vincents had no visual intimation of them, nor had other people, except those who once in a while caught a glimpse of Corsica, like a cloud on the horizon, or saw a cloud on the horizon, which they mistook for Corsica. On this southern side were nearly all the windows—real windows. Of course this was a fine arrangement. Every room had the southern

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exposure, and the sunlight all day long; every room was warm and bright.

So, then, at the back there were no windows; the largest of the real windows were in front; at the sides, east and west, were the false windows.

They were a very good imitation. Examining the villa from the outside you would be sure to say it had nineteen lights. No; only fifteen. Four were false.

The builder, one day, when he was called in to direct certain repairs, explained to Vincent his purpose in making these false windows. "It is better for the sake of warmth," he said, "to leave the walls at the sides blank; but that looked too plain, so I put these imitations where windows would naturally be found. That makes all symmetrical."

Now, Vincent, for his part, would have preferred actual lights or an uncompromising blank wall, one thing or the other without deceit. But since these false windows were there, he thought he might as well use them.

He did use them now and then. For example, his garden was rather small, while on both hands the olive grove surrounding

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it, terraced, with many fine old trees, capable of becoming an earthly paradise, was for sale. As he looked through the false windows on the east he saw a multitude of date-palms, fig trees, and orange trees, covering the land on that side; while by looking through the false windows on the west he saw a fine cascade—a thing he was very fond of, and the very thing needed to complete the picture—tumbling down the terraced hillside, between the ever-gray olive trees. One could easily have diverted enough water for that purpose from a stream which started above among the mountains, but now took a different course.

Very useful false windows! There were petty annoyances here as elsewhere. There were little two-penny devils, so insignificant that one would think it cowardly to beat them or to send them with a kick to the father of lies; and a two-penny devil with his antics is positively amusing as one looks at him through the builder's contrivances to promote symmetry. Possibly all troublesome things have their funny side; at any rate, they seem to have when they do not put themselves directly in front of fifteen real lights.

XXV

Seeing Corsica

The little daughter's third birthday brought a lot of merriment to the villa: gifts and more abundant kisses and a cake with four candles, and a place at her parents' table for herself; champagne for the servants; an excursion planned for the small heroine (who slept most of the way), and all that sort of thing; and it was on that day, and owing to the peculiar nature of the day, that the Vincents made their memorable attempt to see Corsica.

Vincent had waked before sunrise, and gone to the open window of his bedroom. The air was dry and light; there was not a bit of mist on the horizon. "Such," he said to himself, "are the proper conditions for seeing Corsica—at last." The island is so distant that it is visible from San Remo only when the sun rises in a perfectly clear atmosphere. He had never succeeded in making it out up to that time; in fact—but the result shall be told presently.

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His next thought was that, this being Baby's birthday, in honor of the occasion she had been put to sleep in her mother's room, instead of the nursery. "And she is probably awake already, after the manner of such young people," he thought; "at least it might be worth while to see." So he crept downstairs from his den and listened at their door.

Yes; at that moment he heard the rustling of bed-clothes and could fancy a tiny figure in white raising itself from a heap of warm coverlets—holding itself upright with a firm grasp on the railing of the crib—peering over toward the larger bed, perhaps pushing aside the curtains. Then "Nurse! nurse!" he heard the daughter call softly, not remembering where she was; but suddenly, with glad recognition, changing to: "Mamma! mamma, I am tired of this little crib; I want to come into your big bed." Then he heard them both laugh merrily—both wide awake in an instant, without any drowsy transition. Then he knocked and cried, "Good morning!"

In the early morning one is so keen for subtle pleasures! To hear the lock turned softly from within; to have come from the

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roar of the surf and from the keen night air that had poured in through one's open window—then down a draughty flight of marble steps—then into the still and luxurious atmosphere of this big bedroom, sweet with the odor of "*Essenza di violetta di San Remo.*" . . .

It was so dark in the room—the shutters being closed, and double curtains drawn till they overlapped and were then pinned together—that he lit a candle on the night-table. Forthwith the little three-year-old and the little twenty-odd-year-old began playing at shadow-pictures on the wall, and telling each other stories with these shadow pictures for illustrations—much cleverer, it seemed to Vincent, than the stories for children in books, for the mother's were bright satires on people all three knew, making them all, even very stupid friends, seem entertaining, while the daughter put new life into worn-out rhymes by means of her quaint speech and pretty gestures and helpful perversions, singing:

"No matter *if* you do,
So your heart be true. . . .
And the last words that he uttered,
As his *hafener* he fluttered,
Were, 'My heart is true to Poll.' "

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But the common saying to the effect that good humor, rather than wit, makes good company, is never more true than when three are in one bed—however large; and much wiser people than the Vincents have found that before breakfast one is no less easily irritated than easily pleased. So we must hear a quaint saying of Baby's that ended what threatened to become a serious argument between the two older members of the party.

It was a question in regard to saddle-horses, Gloria holding that those of San Remo were fit to ride, and that she would like two of them; Vincent maintaining that they were no better than saw-horses, and that if she would only wait a little while—etc. Now it happened that Baby had seen a jackass the day before, which had made her laugh—it was such a very small ass, with more than the usual length of ears and even less than the usual asinine tractability, although its driver was invoking all the saints, “oop-ing” and calling it his dear little “Grisa,” as an appeal to its better nature. “Grisa” had made an impression on Baby's fancy, and Baby was listening attentively as her parents discussed the pro-

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priety of having horses to ride. Finally she said: "My word, mamma, I *should* like to have a picture of you when you are dwessed weady to get on your mule."

A good laugh at this brought back good humor, and then, to change the subject, "Speaking of pictures," said Gloria, "I had a curious dream about those two empty picture frames in the dressing-room."

The frames she referred to were evidently intended to hold large portraits, but they now stared blankly at each other from opposite walls of her daintily furnished dressing-room, quite as though each had literally stared the other out of countenance.

"I dreamt," she continued, "that there was a flattering portrait of Mademoiselle Mora in one of the frames—at least I suppose it must have been flattering, for it made her quite good-looking; and in the other frame was—what do you suppose?"

"Her sweetheart, naturally," Vincent suggested.

"Not a man at all, but only a scarecrow figure of a man. The head was a squeezed-out orange, his legs were burnt matches, his body was a sponge and his arms were leeches. Above the hole in the orange that

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represented his mouth he had two big, staring, greedy eyes."

"A curious dream, indeed," Vincent said; "and there is some truth in it, too, as I will tell you another time. Baby would hardly understand the story, and she herself is to be our heroine to-day."

"So now, Miss Three-year-old," he continued, "will you just look hard at the wall there where you and mamma have been making shadow-pictures, and tell me what you see."

"But I don't see anything there now—" with disappointment.

"There is a window on the outside of that wall, just where you are looking," Vincent said. "It doesn't come through the wall, you know. It is only a false window, with shutters you can't open, and stone or brick—I'm sure I don't know which—behind the shutters. Now, as I look *through* this false window I see—"

Here Vincent held a taper that he found on the night-table near the candle so that its long thin shadow was cast on the wall.

"I see a long straight path in Hyde Park, that leads from Hyde Park Corner almost to the Water-works at the head of the Ser-

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entine in Kensington Gardens, where you and nurse used to feed the ducks."

"Yes, and ducks and peacocks and—such a many ducks!" cried Baby, now thoroughly interested.

"I know the diagonal walk you mean," said Gloria; "it ends at Victoria Gate on the Bayswater side."

"Well, then," Vincent went on, "you remember it was just a long walk and not a very pretty one—with a few scrubby trees here and there, and little else worth looking at—only a great big piece of land that people make shocking use of. But now look through the false windows, and you will see—"

Here Vincent cast another shadow on the wall, to illustrate his meaning as well as he could.

"You will see a very great and very beautiful building, the largest and most useful in all the world, that rises near the centre of the park, where that diagonal path used to pass—in fact, the path is there still, and goes right through the building, as you notice; only—such a change! Suppose we were at Lancaster Gate, and were starting out for a walk together—"

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“Not at this season, thanks,” said Gloria.
“Fog!”

“I’d wather be here and see the flowers,”
from Baby.

“And so you could see the same flowers and find the same season there, by going a short walk to the Paradise; that is the name of the big building. No matter at what time in the year, you would be sure to find the right season, and no end of beautiful plants there. Eden was the name given to a garden like this, ever so long ago; and the Garden of Eden is said to have had something around it that kept out the cold winds and the storms. And the two people who lived in that garden were perfectly happy and strong, and all the beasts that lived there were well and kind, and all the plants there had sweet fruit or pretty flowers—just because the bad weather could not get in to spoil the people and the plants, and to make the beasts savage because it was so hard for them to find their food.

“Of course, the Paradise in Hyde Park is a great deal pleasanter than the Garden of Eden, because there are more things to see

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and more things to do; and isn't it fine to walk right out of all the cold and the damp and the smoke of London into a garden that's as warm as our little garden here—only a great deal prettier and a very great deal larger?"

But Vincent was not able to go on with the description, for at this point his illustrative shadow on the wall began to fade away, and at the same time to grow larger—or no, to be replaced by another much larger shadow that was cast from the opposite side of the room.

"Why not have your building larger?" the new shadow seemed to suggest as it became more and more distinctly outlined on the wall. "Why should not a *whole town* have something around it to keep out the cold winds and the storms?"

The new shadow was cast by some object near the window. The sun was up so far that its light forced itself even through the close-drawn curtains.

And Corsica?—Too late to look for it then. The right moment, the moment of sunrise, had passed.

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Margherita came to say, in her agreeable voice, that hot water was ready in the dressing-room.

Afterward, when people assured the Vincents that Corsica might be seen at sunrise, they could only reply, "Indeed?"

XXVI

Why the House was Let

The Promenade was a wide, unshaded pavement, separated from the highway on the one side by a narrow plantation of date-palms, and on the other side separated by a strip of beach—rocky, shelving, covered with heaps of seaweed—from the Mediterranean. It was a principal lounging place, basking place and meeting place for the English colony at San Remo. “Where shall I meet you?” if asked in English, was pretty sure to elicit the answer, “Under a sun-umbrella on the Promenade”—for there was no large social club. There was, however, a lawn-tennis club, with courts near the Promenade.

One day Vincent was driving along by the Promenade, coming from tennis, in company with Gloria and Ravelli Cav. Alberto, maestro di musica. (He looked so grand in his new coat and a new felt hat, adorned with a watered-silk band, and worn

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cocked over his eyes, that we must give him his full title.) Their singing lesson finished, master and pupil had kindly driven down from Villa Mora to pick Vincent up at the tennis courts.

In tennis flannels Vincent felt himself a poor fellow for such fine company, besides acknowledging himself their debtor for so much courtesy. Therefore, in the usual fashion of poor debtors, he resolved to offer interest where he could not repay the principal obligation.

Referring to the first striking figure they passed on the Promenade, "There goes the man himself!" said Vincent.

It so happened that the person thus indicated was a tall, stout man, wrapped in a cloak, although the day was warm. Beneath the cloak his body appeared to be fat, but his legs were thin. His heavy mustache and imperial, covering a large part of his yellow face; a certain air he had of being alone (I can't describe it otherwise), of being a separate figure—of wishing to be represented by head and shoulders only, with the thin legs invisible—these things suggested the images one sees on coin of the realm.

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"He looks like Victor Emanuel," said Ravelli; "that is, like a very inferior Victor Emanuel."

"Like a Victor Emanuel the Ninety-Ninth," Gloria suggested.

"That is his name," Vincent said. "He shall be called Ninety-Nine from this instant. But it's only by reason of mustachios and long hair that he resembles a great man. Take off mustachios and long hair, and what would his face look like?"

"Round and yellow like an orange."

"And wrinkled like a squeezed orange, and legs like burnt matches, and so forth and so forth. Don't you see? It is the man himself!"

"But what man?"

"Mademoiselle Mora's lover—or rather, the man she once loved," said Vincent; then continuing, "Signor Ravelli, do you know of anything romantic in connection with the villa that Mademoiselle Mora built, in which we are now living?"

"Nothing whatever, signore. It is a new house. It takes time to make a romance."

"Yes, it takes time; it takes a few minutes at least," Vincent said, and then called

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out to Michele to drive down to the harbor, only a short distance from where they were.

As they were proceeding thither Vincent questioned Gloria on a subject they had spoken of before.

“Was our villa not furnished in a surprising way, considering that it was the property of a single lady?”

“Yes, certainly. It seemed to be furnished for a family. That was the best part of it; everything was there at hand for baby and nurse and all.”

“Even for me?” Vincent suggested.

“Quite so, even for you.”

“And then,” Vincent continued, “those two picture-frames of the same pattern, without a sign of a picture in them, vacantly staring at each other from opposite sides of your dressing-room—”

But meantime they had come to the harbor, and, walking along the pier, were captivated by the view of San Remo from that point.

“There is our house!” cried Gloria. “How plainly we can see it! I wonder if that infamous grandeur called Baby is looking this way.”

Turning to Ravelli, Vincent asked, “As

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far as we can see, east and west, what do you think the best situation for a house?"

"Just where Madame is looking," he replied.

"So Mademoiselle Mora thought. She hoped it would please Ninety-Nine."

"Now I remember," said Gloria; "I do believe I have seen that man pass our house once or twice—and stare in. Yes, I do remember him now. He stared like the orange-face in my dream."

"Quite natural conduct on his part, as you will agree when you know the story," Vincent said. "The story is, that Mademoiselle Mora, about twenty years ago, had a lover—the man we passed just now on the Promenade. They wanted very much to marry each other, but at that time were both too poor. Mademoiselle Mora, as she now calls herself, was at that time called Carolina Fornari—or Fornari Carolina, to put the names in the order that is usual here. She was a plain little body, with soft eyes and an unusually large voice. Both she and the man you have named Ninety-Nine were natives of San Remo and children of small tradespeople.

"Well, you see, after a tiresome engage-

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ment of several years' duration, Ninety-Nine forsook poor Carolina in order to marry a woman with money. He had several children in course of time, but no business; he used up his wife's money, and then tried to support himself by looking like the image on a coin—at least he seems to have done nothing else, and yet to have had a certain degree of currency, like a false coin that still has some purchasing power in the dark and on the sly. His wife died; he is still current; but whether his cloak hides tatters or not—as many holes as the sponge in your dream—I am not prepared to say.

“Carolina went on the stage as a chorus girl. She had a little talent, and she worked hard. From the chorus she was promoted to minor parts, and finally served as prima donna assoluta in various provincial companies, making money and saving it—finally investing all her earnings in Riviera lands, which have risen in value enormously. ‘She is stingy—the Mora is,’ people in her profession used to say of her then, calling her by her stage name. She herself retained this stage name—with the addition Mademoiselle, because she made her first success in France—when she gave

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up singing. That was when more than two hundred thousand lire were placed to her credit at the banker's."

"That rascal!" cried Ravelli, for his enemy the mayor was the banker referred to.

"A snug little fortune for a single lady," Vincent continued. "And so the poor Fornari Carolina became rich Mademoiselle Mora, returned to her native place, and built that villa yonder—built it and furnished it for her old lover and his children. He was to know nothing of her plan until all the work had been finished; but what pains she took to remember his tastes and have everything precisely as he would wish! How often she trembled to think of the changes in his tastes which time must have wrought, but which she could not take into account! Would he like this or that arrangement? How could she tell? so many years having passed. Then, too, she would find herself blushing hotly when questions arose in regard to furnishing the bedrooms. Would he think her so very ugly? When made up on the stage some gentlemen had even admired her, and told her so—impertinently, as she thought. And so she had

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sent them all away with bitter words. But now it was a pleasure to remember that men had made love to her, for so *one* might again. And yet, and yet, off the stage, how plainly gray hairs do show around one's temples!

“When such painful doubts as these assailed her she would tell the master-builder to take his own time. ‘There was no hurry,’ she would say; ‘in fact, he might make such and such alterations in the original plans’; and several whimsical details in the arrangement of our house are due to Mademoiselle Mora’s fits of nervous irresolution. When she trembled to think what might happen, she invented these things, which we now notice as peculiar, to make more work and so postpone the day of fate. But again hope would rise and stir her heart with tender eagerness. Then the work could not be pushed on rapidly enough to please her. ‘Oh! never mind such trifles,’ she would cry impatiently, in reference to some time-consuming direction she had given. ‘Let us finish! Let us finish! Will the house *never* be finished?’ One sees evidence of this vacillation in the present condition of our house, of which

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some portions were most carefully done, while plainly other portions were hurried over.

“Finally all was ready, and the vases in every room were filled with flowers. Then Ninety-Nine came, having been summoned from Naples, whither he had wandered as a wandering fraud, and where he had found a great population of frauds like unto himself. Among the Neapolitans he had almost felt himself an honest man. Baser counterfeits than he circulated freely in that beautiful and musical town.

“So, after many years of separation and silence—forgetfulness on his part, loving purpose on hers—these two middle-aged people met.”

“Well,” Gloria interrupted at this point, “what came of it?”

“Don’t you see?” Vincent said. “She had been cultivating mind and heart in her long unselfish effort for him, constantly holding in remembrance the young lover as she had known him—as an ordinary young man, neither beautiful nor ugly, neither wholly good nor wholly mean. As such it had been possible for her to love him; and in her modesty she had been fearful only

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lest she herself had become unlovely. Her unchanged girlish love for the man had kept her from believing any reports to his discredit that had reached her ears. But now in one moment of approximation she found that he had sunk below quite as much as she had risen above the old level on which they had met and associated as equals. Then, too, he was physically so inferior to her—a well-preserved woman; the marks of an ignoble life are so repulsive at first sight. He was now indelibly stamped with the character of—but no matter what. I don't want to call the fellow any more bad names.

“Mademoiselle Mora did not call him hard names, but just shut up the house which she could not bear to live in after such a disappointment. Villa Mora was offered to be let, and I took it. Ninety-Nine remained in San Remo to walk in the public garden and on the Promenade as you just now saw him.”

“Is that the end?” Gloria asked.

“No, I don't believe it is the end; in fact it's likely we may see the end before we go away.”

“What do you mean?—that the story is actually true? I don't believe a word of it.

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I believe you have been looking through those false windows of yours again. But how about her taking to the life of a beggar?"

"That part I have not seen quite clearly as yet," Vincent said. "I shall try to find out and tell you later."

"Oh, *that* is not an unheard-of thing," Ravelli said. "I know of a countess who lives between here and Genoa. Her name escapes me at the moment, but I know she has a fine house, with stables, carriages, and horses—all elegant as you please—in one town, and begs in the streets of another."

Yes, but such a parallel case is not an explanation.

XXVII

Pink and White Tickets

At San Remo there is only a narrow strip of level ground between the mountains and the Mediterranean Sea; but this narrow strip is, as all the world knows, singularly blest in respect of a mild winter climate. In February the orange trees were laden with ripe fruit, while at the same time already beginning to blossom for another crop. The almond trees were in full bloom; so were the mimosas; so were the roses in Vincent's garden; so were the wild violets—fragrant wild violets. Nurse and Baby took a basket to fill with flowers when they went for a walk under the olive trees.

But just above the town the mountain tops were covered with ice and snow. Not more than an hour of fast walking was needed to take one to the snow line.

Vincent went from the villa up to the snow line, getting well into the region of icy

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winds before eleven o'clock, and then descending about noon, with an intensified relish for all the warmth and verdure of the sheltered coast. It had been quite worth while, he thought, as he came down the steep and very rough mule path near Villa Mora—it had been worth while to face such bitter winds not alone because of that magnificent Alpine view one has near the summit, but also because he had been so stung and cut and rasped by an hour of severe winter that he was quite ready to appreciate mild air—and luncheon—and other good things.

Just after making this conventional observation upon the salutary effects of sharp exercise, he saw an unconventional sight. Coming up the mule path, singing and laughing, was a party of four peasants, one of whom—an exceedingly pretty girl, a ripe product of the climate I have just been praising—had taken off her dress and was carrying it on her bare arm. But this did not seem an unconventional proceeding to her or to her companions. She wanted to make the ascent with greater comfort, that was all.

A classical touch in the sunny hillside;

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the fine, half-naked figure; the snow line just above. Excellent climate!

As for the classical element here, remember that until recently—until the highway and railway were opened—many of these villages had no communication with the outside world, save by means of an occasional small trading vessel; and that even between village and village of the Riviera there was so little intercourse that the customs and costumes of one village might resemble those of Corsica rather than those of its nearest neighbor. So, of course, one finds Old-World traits among Ligurians; and perhaps it was an aboriginal impulse that Ninety-Nine obeyed when he came under the windows of Villa Mora one night. He had taken so much of the strong Corsican wine that he forgot at least two grave facts—that he was more of a wandering fraud than a wandering minstrel, and that Mademoiselle Mora no longer dwelt in the villa bearing her name. He began a serenade. “*Oje Caruli*” he sang first, as a delicate reminder of the days when he had called her Caroline or Caruli, and “*Oje Caruli*” intolerably. Next in a quavering voice he sang “*Penso,*” and strove after impressive crescendo effects

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when he reached the words "*Ma tu—tu l'hai scordato*" ("But thou—thou hast forgotten.")

And an archaic simplicity was manifest in the unfortunate affair of the housemaid Margherita.

Margherita was a woman of about thirty years, good-looking, virtuous, strong, and a thoroughly trained servant, with broad shoulders and a soft voice. Since she had been in the Vincents' service her master and mistress had gladly referred to her as an example of steadiness and good sense. "At least some of these people," they had repeatedly said, "are entirely reliable." But one day Margherita tried to drown herself in the well. Why? Because there had been some talk of marriage between her and a gardener at the Hotel Victoria. He told her that he intended to marry another woman; so on his wedding day she became violently insane. Vincent took council with the best medical authorities, and they advised her removal from the house. Fits of melancholy alternating with violent paroxysms followed the first outburst, and finally with much regret Vincent saw himself obliged to adopt the foreign doctors'

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advice. We don't believe in such things nowadays, but evidently they happen in Liguria, and the contemplation of them puts one in the proper frame of mind for considering the uses of the pink and white tickets.

Vincent had received the following note:

"HOUSE OF CHARITY, 21, CORSO GARIBALDI, 21.

"SAN REMO, January 8th.

"*Dear Sir:* I have been told that you expressed a desire of having some tickets to give to the poor.

"The (enclosed) pink tickets are good for soup and bread at 12½, and at 7½ in the evening, and for a night's lodging.

"The (enclosed) white tickets are good for three times.

"I hope you will excuse the liberty I take, but it is in the cause of charity and humanity.

"Any time you should like to visit my establishment, I shall have much pleasure in showing you over.

"Allow me to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. May it prove a prosperous one.

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours very truly,

"——, PRIEST."

In response he went to see Father ——, paid for the tickets he had sent, and inquired into the methods employed, finding him a very pleasant old gentleman, whose face seemed unaccountably familiar until Vincent recognized in him the priest he had seen in a draper's shop, bargaining, with

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his housekeeper's assistance, for merino undershirts.

"Your system is like that of charity organization in America?" Vincent asked after explaining the design in organized charity as well as he could.

"Yes," rather doubtfully.

"In other words, you intend to relieve all cases of genuine distress, but to investigate and expose fraudulent cases and professional beggars?"

"No," replied the other quite frankly. "We want to provide for everybody who applies to us. If they need food or shelter their need is a sufficient argument."

"It is like the old monastic system, then?"

"Precisely. We can't do just what the church to which you owe your charity organization system—the English Church—does, you know; for in England the church is a morality-school, while in Italy it is the common home. Our children play marbles on the altar steps during mass. I wanted to stop that once, but the parents were enraged, and accused me of meaning to turn them out of their 'natural home.' "

The amount of this was, then, that the House of Charity, under an illusive appear-

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ance of conformity with modern ideas, revived the practice of indiscriminate almsgiving through which, during the Middle Ages, monastic establishments fostered pauperism and increased the influence of Rome.

I don't mean that such unscrupulous charity is wholly bad. Charity is such a good noun that it blesses even any long, disqualifying adjective you can write before it.

From the Vincents' point of view the chief trouble was that, now that they had these tickets, the door-bell rang from morning till night, and from time to time the maid—poor Margherita's successor—would come, saying in French something that sounded like, "Sir, 'tis a poor person who *demands* a ticket."

No, I don't mean that it is wholly bad, but—but—just think what these Ligurians are already, without any further encouragement to beg. They are not actually poor, you know. The poorest may have a cabin and a bit of land to cultivate, not too far from a good market for fruit and vegetables; in fact, many of the poorest-looking beggars actually have their cabin and garden in a snug nook on the hillside, making

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a good profit in that way, and begging besides. So they are doubly rich. But they inherit a taste for begging, and have no sense of the shame of it—a thing hard for us to understand, yet literally true. Even in out-of-the-way places a child just learning to walk will instinctively put out its hand when a stranger passes; it must be taught to walk, but begs by instinct.

The system that Father —— upheld seemed to Vincent well adapted to the tastes of the people, but not so well adapted to their needs. “They need lessons in self-respect,” he said, “more than they need pink or white tickets for soup and bread and lodging. Lovable, fascinating people they are, with their high notes in music and character. But this blessed climate does not encourage such stern virtues as self-reliance, and we must acknowledge that eccentric conduct is a little too common here; that the best Ligurians forget what is due to their own character a little too easily; and your church must hold itself partly responsible for this inveterate begging habit. Really, now, there is too much of it. Why, even an admirable woman like Mademoiselle Mora, who made

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her way in life by honest hard work, put all her money into real property, and then took to begging, sir—begging in the roads, and made up to look like an old hag. She must have sucked the trick of it with her mother's milk, for her mother's parents had done the same thing on a small scale, having a nice little place near Bussana, which one parent cultivated while the other went out in rags to beg. Of course, Mademoiselle Mora wouldn't have done it if she hadn't been disappointed in her lover at forty and cheated of her reward in life; but to turn cynic to quite such an extent, to drop from her high note to roadside notoriety—why, sir, this conspicuous example of a common practice suggests to me that you ought to cast the weight of your influence against the practice, unless, indeed, it shows that there may be more fun in begging than we suppose."

To this effect Vincent expressed himself; but a few days later at the villa he was heard to say: "Here comes the maid again. Another poor person who demands relief, eh? Well! Well, I must send to Father——for some more pink and white tickets."

XXVIII

At the Casino

One of the memorable drives they took was that to Monte Carlo.

The highway between San Remo and Vintimiglia is interesting merely, but from that point onward becomes superb, with a constant view of the sea on one hand, and on the other mountain slopes, very grand yet very kind-looking, with their terraced sides so fruitful. Vincent rode part of the way on the box with Michele, whom he unfeignedly liked as a fine, hardy specimen, scorning gloves, top-coat, and lap-robe. He told Vincent a delicious story about a certain Baron C——, a Russian, who used to live at San Remo part of each year.

It appears that this noble Russian would drive over to Monte Carlo now and then to play at the Casino. Sometimes he would drive back in the same style, and then the good people of San Remo when they saw him returning, would exclaim, "*Ecco!* the

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Baron C—— has won.” But more frequently he would hire for the return trip an old broken-down carriage, with a single limping horse, which he could get for almost nothing—that is, for the little money he had left after playing. Then would the shop-keepers in Victor Emanuel Street shake their forefingers with an expressive backward turn, signifying, “The Baron C—— has lost. Alas!” Once he gained forty thousand francs; whereupon he hired sixteen asses, hitched them tandem-wise to a bath-chair, and seated in this bath-chair drove his sixteen asses through Victor Emanuel Street. For a few moments the scene was like the height of carnival; then a sudden hush fell upon the town, for every one was busily writing. By the next mail Baron C—— received from every tradesman in San Remo an invitation to inspect his wares *without charge* (Ingresso libero).

Another of Michele’s stories was as follows:

Almost any day you may see on Victor Emanuel Street a little hairless Frenchman. He was a rich man when he married, and took his bride from Paris to the Riviera for their honeymoon. They visited the Casino

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and played, and lost every franc of their united fortunes. He did not shoot her and hang himself, this little Monsieur X——, but he just got very sick and then got well again. When he recovered he found himself without a hair on his head or face. He came to San Remo and began to give lessons in French, while Madame X—— set up a millinery shop. His fortunes have begun to grow again—not so his hair. He had been literally and permanently fleeced.

* * *

An earthly paradise is Monte Carlo, surely. So exquisitely kept, so becomingly placed, the town is like one vast luxurious chamber with bright, warm mountain sides for its walls; while the Casino is like some women one sees, and sees with delight, who are too fine for every day, but delicious for a holiday or a ball. The master of this beautiful mistress Monte Carlo Casino lets her to a company for ten millions a year; and the company in turn lets her for ever so much more in money, and a number of lives, to the public. But of course most of the suicides ascribed to Mistress Casino's baleful influence would occur elsewhere if she were not made so alluring. She allures a

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lot of unfortunate, discouraged, weak-hearted people who are quite ready to die, promising them at least a glimpse of beauty and a bare chance of fortune. Those are mostly useless lives that are just thrown away as indifferently as one knocks ashes out of a pipe, merely because Mistress Casino has won. No record is kept of the people who have gained new hope and new interest in life from looking at Mistress Casino's beauty and sharing her gay society for a few hours. This is a highly immoral sentiment, is it not? Bah! It does no good to strain the truth in order to emphasize our private prejudices. Mistress Casino is bad enough, but suppose we allow for the good she does and look fairly into her fair face. Beautifully dishonest Monte Carlo! Among towns you are as Phryne was among women. You will probably be acquitted by those judges who have seen you; you will be wholly condemned only by those who have not seen you.

At one of the roulette tables they saw a lady whom both Vincent and his friend Maranato recognized at the same moment.

She was comfortably seated, while most of the players near her were standing; her

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money was stacked in two neat gold columns on the table before her, one of these columns representing (in twenty-franc pieces) the amount she had decided to stake that day, while the other represented her winnings; she noted the recurrence of certain numbers in a little book she kept for this purpose; and her quietly observant manner gave further evidence of her being an habituée. But she was far from having the curved back, sallow face and greedy eyes that novelists apparently find at every gaming table; on the contrary, she was just a plump and neatly dressed body who would have looked well presiding over weak tea and thin bread and butter, and as for her complexion, that was decidedly fine, unless perhaps a trifle too ruddy. Her neck, where beauty lingers in middle life as the summer lingers in certain sheltered places, was especially pretty—round and smooth and firm, with one small coquettish black dot below the left ear, which nature must have added as a happy thought after finishing an otherwise too simple figure.

“Odd!” said Maranato, calling Vincent’s attention to this lady. “I think I’ve seen her before somewhere—on the

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stage, I believe, although she looks domestic enough. Now I remember; in Lyons four years ago. She was singing in the 'Barber of Seville.' Very good voice, too, but not much of an actress."

"Odd!" Vincent repeated. "So have I seen her before—a few months ago, sitting by me in the carriage—dressed like an old beggar woman. She didn't act the part especially well on that occasion either. I am quite sure it is Mademoiselle Mora."

XXIX

One Effect of a Delicious Climate

Several times Vincent was tempted to force the interest of the curious little romance which had been growing under his observation. Mademoiselle Mora was such an enigmatical character that he wanted to find out the whole truth about her; and she was to him so original and novel—withal so sympathetic in her way of doing things, obeying a high “sense of duty” for half her life, and afterward apparently following mere whims, with absolute contempt for anybody’s and everybody’s “sense of duty”—that he was impatient to understand her at once. But then he realized that this would be foolish. The romance was growing without labor, quietly and steadily and as fast as he could understand it. The studies he made of other Ligurians aided him from day to day more and more fully to understand Mademoiselle Mora’s nature—for she seemed to be a genuine Ligurian

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type; while she, in turn, thus uniting in her single person his haphazard observations, rendered all her fellow-Ligurians more intelligible. So she lent a warm personal color to what might otherwise have been but cold generalizations; he liked her exceedingly, perhaps for the very reason that she piqued his curiosity; and, in fine, he decided that he would do much better if he continued to let the information he desired come quite unsought.

And quite unsought it did continue to come—as, for example, when one of the “office boys,” dining with the Vincents, entertained them by recounting an adventure of which Mademoiselle Mora was the heroine.

The “office boys,” I must explain, were the lieutenants in the battalion of *Bersaglieri* stationed at San Remo. They happened to be rather young looking, most of them; so before Gloria and Vincent knew any of them personally they began to call these young officers “office boys.” Since they had met some of them at the public balls during the winter, the officers seemed to enjoy coming to Villa Mora, and the Vincents liked to have them. They were so

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entirely official, stamped and branded officer-or-nothing, that Vincent still used this form of expression in speaking of these very nice and agreeable young gentlemen. One of them, however, was called "Gardener," owing to the following circumstance. He was a captain in the regiment, and but little thought of by his fellow-officers, as his manner was gruff and his disposition rather unfriendly. Now, it happened that a short time before this captain had found himself at a large ball, called the "Eye-Ball"—the proceeds from the sale of tickets being devoted to the support of an ophthalmic hospital. Gloria had noticed him as a lonely fellow, and expressed a wish to have him presented to her. One of the "office boys" took a message to that effect, but soon returned with a very red face to say that the captain declined the honor! Thereupon Vincent interposed, sending the "office boy" back to correct the previous message. "It was not his wife," he explained, "but himself who had wanted to see the captain, as he was looking for a gardener to take care of his grounds. The work was easy, and no references required. Would the captain like the situation?" The

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captain's apologies were offered, and of course it came out that he had misunderstood the first message.

The Vincents were dining four of the "office boys," together with Captain "Gardener," the prefect of the department, with his charming Roman wife, and Lady F—— and her two daughters.

Lieutenant C——, a Venetian, spoke in broken French to the English ladies, but in very musical Italian to Vincent. "There are three periods in a feast," said he: "one, *silentium*—that is before the good cheer begins to cheer; two, *stridentium*" (this he illustrated by tapping his teeth)—"that is when the best work is done."

"And what is the third period?" asked the prefect.

Lieutenant C—— said he would tell when they came to it; but when that time arrived, he had forgotten his promise, and the prefect had forgotten his question. Lieutenant C—— had a term for ladies of exuberant figure, "*Senatus Populusque Romanus*," he said, tapping his own full chest.

Lieutenant G——, who had once been in Paris, kept laughing at Lieutenant C——'s

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French. That made him appear to be quite witty.

Lieutenant M—— looked placidly happy.

Lieutenant R——, the vivacious, did not know a word of English, but was often invited to entertainments in the English colony; and being a punctilious society man, he kept on hand three model English notes—one of acceptance, one of regret and one of condolence. By a quite natural mistake he once sent the note of condolence in reply to an invitation to afternoon tea. It is not enough to say that many Italians hate tea. They do not know what to do with it, but they will sniff it wonderingly, as though to ask, “Is it something for the hair?”

“Lieutenant R—— has learned with heartfelt sorrow,” etc.

Such was his answer when invited to afternoon tea.

It was this Lieutenant R—— who narrated the adventure with Mademoiselle Mora to which I have referred—a most singular story, I must say, but told very convincingly.

He began by holding out at arm's length a black-and-white mask that was by his plate; for the carnival being now near at

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hand, Gloria had thought it appropriate to have the menu written on the inside of masks, one for each guest.

“It is evident,” he said, “that our hostess has had the kind thought to provide us with masks for the *veglione di gala*,”—the *veglione di gala* being the first masked ball of the carnival season. “Now, when we get heated in dancing with these masks on, we shall have the menu printed on our foreheads. It will be printed backward, of course, and so nobody else can read it; but we shall be able to see what we have had to-night by looking into a mirror.”

Everybody laughed at this whimsical idea; and having thus secured general attention he continued:

“This black-and-white mask is just like a person I met at Monte Carlo, for the person had two characters as different as the black half of this mask is different from the white half. You see, I rather got into trouble lately for lack of money, and so I thought I’d try my luck at the Casino. I need not explain the circumstances, but the fact is I had never played before, and should not have done so but for very pressing reasons. Well, I managed to borrow nine

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hundred francs among my friends—Lieutenant M—— and the captain could tell you where I got some of it—said good-by as though I didn't expect to come back, and took the train for Monte Carlo. I went in civilian's clothes, of course, as we officers are forbidden to play. Reaching Monte Carlo about the middle of the afternoon, I went directly to the Casino, which is only a few steps from the station, as you know. Like a genuine beginner and greenhorn I had worked out a scheme on the way, and was so confident of success that when a beggar woman, a sympathetic poor creature, asked for charity as I was about to enter the Casino Garden I handed her a ten-franc note. 'If I win,' I said to myself, 'what shall I care for a small matter like ten francs; and if I lose, the money will do more good in her hands than in the Casino bank. Besides, it may bring me luck. Pity she hasn't a hump that I can rub my purse on.' But I didn't really believe I *could* lose.

"I was in the *salle de jeu* little more than one hour. I had lost everything—all this borrowed money. I had a queer, numb feeling as I stood there at the big table for

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a few minutes longer, looking on at the play I couldn't take part in any more. One Austrian, I remember, was staking a thousand francs each time, and winning again and again and again. But somehow these big sums didn't make my own debts seem any smaller. I could have choked that lucky Austrian. I felt as though somebody were choking *me*. Well, I got out of the rooms, and then, not caring which way I went, naturally turned down the way I had come, toward the station. And here begins the strange part of it all.

"That old beggar was still at her trade in the same place. I felt her eyes on me the minute I came in sight, although it was already growing dark, and wondered if she would have the impertinence to ask me for something more. And sure enough she did! She asked me to do her a favor!

"As I was about to pass her she stopped me by holding out a letter with a trembling hand. 'Would the sweet young gentleman drop that in the post-box at the station for a poor old lame, sick creature? And would he graciously see, when he got to the light at the station, if the address was written so that one could read it? A poor old

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woman's hand would shake so, especially when [she was writing to her dear son.] I just took the letter without thinking or caring, and went on; but when I got to the light I did remember to look at the address.

"It was addressed to me! My full name, the battalion, San Remo, all in a clear, neat hand. So even if I had dropped it in the box it would have reached me.

"I tore open the envelope, and found inside my ten-franc note folded in a thousand-franc note, and both in a half-sheet of paper, on which was the single word 'Interest.'

"A moment of doubt, of bewilderment; then I turned and went quickly up the path again. The old woman was gone!

"I ran through the Casino Garden, up and down, everywhere. Still no extraordinary old woman.

"Then I tried the nearest streets, and with better success; for just before reaching the Hotel Prince de Galles I caught sight of her as she stood before a gate and fumbled in the pocket of her wretched old gown for a key. But before I could come up with her, the key was found, and the gate opened

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and then shut in my face. She was gone once more.

“It seemed to be a servants’ entrance, or private entrance, to a bright little villa—this gate through which she had passed. What could I do? Ring the door-bell and be refused admittance? Or wait where I was for this peculiar old person’s reappearance? I had about decided to take the latter course, when I saw the words ‘Villa Mora’ cut in the stone gate-post. The name struck me at once, owing to what I had heard of the eccentric conduct of the San Remo Mademoiselle Mora, and added fuel to my burning curiosity. As it is customary in these parts to give the proprietor’s name to the villa, I asked myself if this could be the same person. Without more ado I marched boldly up to the front door; rang; said I had called to see ‘M—Mora,’ mumbling the title so that the servant might understand Monsieur Mora or Madame or Mademoiselle, as the case happened to be; sent in my name, and was admitted.

“After I had been kept waiting an unreasonably long time, as I thought, a pleasant-looking lady entered the drawing-room.

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She was a quiet and intensely respectable sort of lady, you know; and when she politely said she was Mademoiselle Mora, and then waited for me to explain my visit, I wished myself on the Red Sea fighting black savages. What could I say? That I wanted to restore a thousand francs to an old beggar who had entered by this lady's gate? That, I thought, would have sounded too ridiculous in her ears—she being evidently a common-sense body. But as I stood hesitating, confused, stammering out excuses, she took pity on me.

“ ‘Would the sweet young gentleman drop this letter in the box for a poor, lame, sick creature?’ she said in the voice and with the gesture of the beggar.

“ ‘So this quiet-looking lady and the beggar were one and the same—or rather, her character was made of the union of these two characters, just as the mask I am holding is made of black silk and white in equal parts.’ ”

At this point Lieutenant R—— discontinued his story, evidently thinking he had already made it at least long enough for a table-talk anecdote; but as the men sat smoking after the ladies had withdrawn, the

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prefect, who took a professional interest in all such matters, questioned him rather too critically, asking: How did she happen to know his name, and that he was in need of money? What was her motive in giving him the thousand francs, and did she seem willing to take it back? Finally, why should a rich woman turn beggar, except with some unlawful purpose?

Such an interrogatory must have irritated Lieutenant R—— somewhat, but he stood too much in awe of the prefect as one of the chief officials of that region to refuse to answer. Possibly he would have been willing to leave the impression that Mademoiselle Mora had long been sensible of his personal attractions, had made inquiries about him in San Remo, and on seeing him enter the Casino had assumed that he would lose, and made her preparations accordingly. That would have been a highly romantic and flattering version of the incident; and an amiable Italian officer loves to figure in some flattering romance. The prefect's direct questioning, however, soon elicited the contrary. Mademoiselle Mora, it appeared, had indeed been interested in him, had made inquiries about him, and had

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sought an opportunity to make him her friend, but with no thought of making him at the same time her lover. On the contrary her interest was to be explained as follows: Lieutenant R—— and Mademoiselle Mora's old sweetheart lived in the same building in the Via Umberto, the former on the first floor, the latter in the garret; and the lieutenant was about the only respectable person who was willing to be seen in company with poor old Ninety-Nine. Mademoiselle Mora had noticed this proof of good-heartedness on the officer's part. She could not yet bring herself to communicate directly with the walking fraud, but she conceived the plan of aiding him through the young gentleman. Here I must give Lieutenant R——'s own words.

“Just fancy!” said he. “She actually looked on me as a good influence. It was the first time I had ever seen myself in that light. She asked me a thousand questions about the old duffer; instructed me to keep him supplied with money, so that he might not be tempted to do anything very bad; promised to send me so-and-so-much each month to be dribbled out to him, and

ONE EFFECT, ETC.

begged me to keep the thousand francs. 'She was treating me with the liberty of an old friend's friend, and it would be a great kindness to her if I should treat her in the same way, borrowing from her, who had more than she needed, whenever I might have less than I required.' Well, I must say she showed keen insight into human nature; for if she had approached me in any ordinary way and made such a proposition I should have had nothing to do with it. As it was, I was so completely fascinated by the strange situation in which I found myself and by the surprise of it all, and the sudden relief from anxiety was so grateful to me, coming immediately after my loss, that I just accepted her offer. I could only kiss her hand by way of thanks, but I should have liked to hug her."

The prefect, when he heard this, wore one of his fine smiles which signify polite but most positive incredulity. "That may all be as you say," he commented, "although it looks to me like a marriage-trap set to catch you, my young friend. Mademoiselle Mora has reached the age when ladies become desperately anxious to be married. My advice to you is not to

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have such compromising interviews too often. But how about my last question? How do you explain her wandering around like a gipsy here and there and everywhere between Monte Carlo and San Remo, or even beyond?"

Thoroughly provoked by the doubt cast upon his statement, Lieutenant R—— replied quite hotly: "Your own mode of life is so different, sir, that I doubt your being able to understand the charm—the absolute freedom, the variety, the adventurous quality—in thus 'wandering around like a gipsy,' as you call it. Probably Mademoiselle Mora inherits a taste for that sort of thing, while the taste for disguises was cultivated during her career on the stage. She told me herself that humdrum respectability was very insipid after having been an artiste. Now just suppose she tried to 'wander around' dressed as a lady; what would be the consequences? You, as the chief magistrate of police, know that she would not be safe for a single hour. She must transform herself into a poor, ugly old woman to keep from being robbed and insulted; so, like a sensible and thorough-

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going creature, she makes the disguise as complete as possible, and, to make it the more complete and natural, pretends to beg, or actually does beg, keeping the money she gets or generously giving it away, just as she sees fit. I declare to you, when I think of an open-air life in this delicious climate and lovely country, I am tempted to turn roadside beggar myself. In her old gown and with her face stained, Mademoiselle Mora is as free as a wild animal, yet absolutely secure, and with two or three snug lairs, called villas, to afford pleasing variety. There is a clever woman for you! Instead of trying to force herself upon her aristocratic neighbors, in the hope of securing a good social position—a thing that would be difficult for the child of simple tradespeople, and a thing that could scarcely have made her happy even if she had tried and been successful—she just lets herself be happy in her own way. *Ecco!"*

* * *

The other guests went away at eleven o'clock, but the officers after twelve, as among themselves it is regarded as an intimation that one has not enjoyed the even-

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ing if one goes before midnight. Delightful fellows! So anxious to please and so eager to be pleased! Wearing their smart new gloves until they were seated at the table; saluting each other with the sharp little word "*Ciao!*"

XXX

Intimations During the Carnival

In the following terms Vincent was invited to take part in the carnival festivities:

"*Monsieur*,—J'ai l'honneur de vous annoncer votre nomination à Membre honoraire du Comité pour les fêtes du Carnaval qui auront lieu dès le 28 février au 5 mars prochains. Veuillez, Monsieur, donner avis de votre aimable adésion à la Présidence du Comité.

Le Secrétaire,

A. ———.

Le Président,

J. B. ———."

The real meaning of this invitation was so plain that, before replying, Vincent asked: How much does it cost to be a member of your committee? But he gave what the secretary called "adésion." Like Mr. Taswell Langdon, this secretary had raided several languages, and added to his store of words the products of casual depredations beyond the Italian border. On his card was printed:

"A teacher at the technical schools and at the *ex-Scuole magistrali femminili* of San Remo since

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eighteen years, has resumed his particular lessons of italian and french.

“Daily, weekly, or monthly accords.”

* * *

When does carnival begin?

Vincent put this question to Lieutenant R——, and he replied: “After Christmas. Between Christmas and the beginning of Lent is carnival season.”

And it was true that ever since Christmas San Remo had worn more or less of the holiday aspect. Balls, public and private, had been numerous, the shops had looked somewhat more shoppy, and the local dandies had worn their local finery with a smarter air. So, also, shortly after New Year's Day, there were posters in all the streets, announcing in French, English, German, Italian, and the dialect of San Remo: “He is born!”—meaning King Carnival.

But the peculiarly carnivalesque celebrations began on the last day of February. Then King Carnival (called Gianduja) himself came to town. This merry monarch, with a company of maskers from other cities, arrived by train at quarter-past two in the afternoon of February 28th. The president of the committee, in robes of state,

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received these welcome guests at the station, while all the floating population of the expectant little city had drifted to the same point. King Gianduja and his courtiers descended from their saloon-carriage, passed through the waiting-room, which was decorated with Oriental carpets and exotic flowers, and appeared on the outer platform of the station, where the municipal guard in full-dress uniform was drawn up in double line to do them honor.

Now, I think it necessary to state that the municipal guard, as it was called, consisted of a handful of policemen, whose full-dress was a glazed tall hat and black frock coat; but it must be understood throughout this description that the carnival at San Remo was in miniature.

When the maskers emerged from the station the populace gave them a rousing ovation. Handkerchiefs were fluttered, flags waved, hats tossed high in air. Applause and cheers testified to the universal satisfaction, while "tears of happiness," if we may credit the statement of a local newspaper, "were shed by the guests as they, humble amid such glory, ascended the superb chariot of the committee."

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The marine band played "God save the carnival," after which the procession made its triumphant entry into Victor Emanuel Street, while church bells rang out merrily, and from their lofty position in the grand stand the town musicians blew their loudest to increase this confusion of joyous sounds. Behind King Gianduja's chariot other decorated cars and carriages fell into line, and so the festival began.

It was not a splendid show, like the Battle of Flowers at Nice, but the Vincents thought more of it because they knew the actors, almost all of them by sight and many by name. So it was not merely attractive as a pageant, but interesting because it showed acquaintances in a new light.

The procession of allegorical chariots, carriages decorated with flowers and bunting, maskers on foot, and a swarm of ragged boys who picked up the bouquets as they fell and sold them again to the merry-makers, passed slowly along Victor Emanuel Street to Columbus Place, and so back again in an unbroken line. Thus one had the opportunity to salute all his acquaintances who took part in the procession, as well as those who had stationed themselves



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on balconies or in windows commanding the course, or who were being jostled by the excited throng on the pavements. A pleasant form of salutation, this, in which flowers are used to express the degrees of interest one feels; now a single bunch for some indifferent person, again half a dozen to a good friend, and a shower of the biggest bouquets as tribute to a pretty face—all returned with eagerness, with much loud laughing, and not seldom with a good pelt-ing of sweets wrapped in gold foil and with long streamers of colored paper attached to them.

But the people one knows are not by any means the only ones to be favored. You will miss the whole kindly spirit of carnival if you think that. Now is the time to compliment any attractive person whom you have secretly been admiring and wishing to meet. Just see how a handsome bunch of roses with a frill of paper about them will be received. Make a respectful bow before you throw them, if you think best; but at any rate throw them, and try your luck. And do you see that peasant woman at the edge of the pavement, holding her child in strong, coarse arms? See if

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you can lodge a soft bunch of Parma violets where the child's shoulder is against the woman's breast. Yonder also, in a mean house, one window is full of common, dull faces. Those people think they have no part in all this fun; that they are too poor and too stupid. Make them a target, with the best you have. Try! and the kindly spirit of carnival will guide your hand.

In the heat of the "contest" Vincent left his carriage for a minute and was hurrying along the pavement on foot, when some one in the crowd turned to throw a bouquet directly in his face—and with all her force, too. It was a small woman, of an especially neat, plump figure, whose features were concealed by a grotesque mask; but Vincent easily recognized her companion—Ninety-Nine himself, shining in a smart new holiday suit like, a freshly plated false coin.

During two hours the battle of flowers continued, ending then not at a given signal, but because the participants were thoroughly tired.

Moreover one had to make preparation for that evening, and such preliminary arrangements required time.

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For on that evening the masked ball took place, at the Theatre Principe Amadeo. True, there was to be a ball every evening of the gay week, but this first was to be also the best.

I need not describe the masked ball, for it had the features common to public masked balls wherever they may be held, without having any feature of striking originality, excepting the "white devils" who opened each dance and implored everybody to be silly. There were the natural fools, dressed in character, shouting and thumping tambourines; here and there a timid soul in a domino—rather selfish people, these, who wanted to enjoy the sight but would not add to the general effect by wearing bright costumes; there were fine ladies wearing masks, as though to invite free speech, yet in terror lest some common person should ask them to dance; there was one man feigning to be a drunken priest, flirting ridiculously with a boy in woman's clothes—and all the rest of it. But I must not neglect to speak a word in praise of the heroine of the evening—the woman whose costume merited the first prize. She represented day and night, and

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from top to toe she was white and black, snow-white on the left side, jet-black on the right. Wig, mask, gown, stockings, shoes, gloves, and even her ear-rings, carried out this idea with perfect consistency. Adroitly taking leave of her admirers and quitting the theater when the distribution of prizes was about to be made, by means of this timely evasion she increased the general interest. "Who was that *bella mascherata*?" people were asking each other. "Where is the pretty young thing in black and white?"

"Not so alarmingly young," Vincent might have answered; for by the merest chance he had recognized her. The ear-rings she wore—one black and the other white, as I have said—were big Spanish hoops, and had doubtless been put on to hide a small black dot below her left ear which would otherwise have betrayed her, being such a characteristic and pretty little mark. In dancing with her he caught sight of it, and instantly remembered that roulette-table at Monte Carlo, with the plainly dressed, business-like Mademoiselle Mora seated at it, her two little columns of gold-pieces and her note-book before her. Then

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this mark had seemed the only coquettish item; now it was proved that she could be all coquetry upon occasion. But of course. Waltz with any woman and you will have in your arms both a prude and a coquette, though not often at the same time a beggar and a capitalist.

Another day of flowers and sweets was Tuesday (Mardi-gras), when the procession gained in brilliancy through the efforts which everybody made to win one of the prizes offered by the city for the best allegorical chariots, the carriages most gorgeously decorated, the maskers on foot most picturesquely attired. Who would be successful? Everybody tried to put on some finishing touch to win over the judges.

A chariot which represented the fraternity and union of European nations gained the first prize; next in order of merit came a gigantic slipper, containing ladies in Turkish costume, black slaves, and the sultan himself; and third was a "Car of Peace," representing that divinity enthroned above a revolving world, around which were grouped the various races of man. But the proprietors of this "car of peace" were enraged

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that they had not gained the first prize, and proceeded to slash and smash their rotating world, thus exposing the goddess of peace to imminent danger of tumbling from her throne. So also one of the maskers on foot, representing Hercules, who felt that his merit had passed unnoticed, tried to carry the 'judges' stand by storm, and, the crowd taking sides, some for him, others for the judges, a general row seemed likely to result. But the "municipal guard," mentioned above, restored order, and Hercules was marched off between two slim policemen in glazed hats.

But a week later, when Gloria and Vincent were beginning to forget that they had ever taken part in such a delightful and characteristically childish affair, they were equally surprised, amused, and pleased to receive a note from the secretary of the committee informing them that "he had the honor and pleasure to announce that the executive committee of the carnival, at its session of the 11th instant, had unanimously awarded a banner of honor (*Bandiera d'Onore*) to the family at the Villa Mora for the elegance of their equipage at the Battle of Flowers." And not long

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after the note had been read a boy came marching up the mule path, singing "*Oje Caruli*" and bearing the *Bandiera d'Onore*. While they were still admiring the new banner—a pretty thing of white satin, red velvet, and heavy gold embroidery—Ravelli called, and, after examining the trophy thoughtfully, as though he had something on his mind which he hesitated to speak about, said, "You made one mistake at the Battle of Flowers, though."

The only one of the two persons addressed who could be supposed to have made any mistake said, "Well, what do you mean?"

"You remember a short-haired, common-looking girl in front of the Cavour restaurant? You threw her flowers every time your carriage passed."

"Well, what then?"

"A bad character, signore. She has just been let out of jail, and it is likely she will be sent back again before long if she doesn't mend her ways."

"But I don't see the point. Do you think, by any chance, she will be less likely to mend her ways because I threw her flowers?"

"No, no, dear signore. It isn't on her

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account. What do I care for her? I say it was a mistake for *you*. All San Remo is talking about it. After all, she is not such a bad-looking girl, is she?"

So, then, all San Remo, with a sudden plunge from carnival into Lent, with a genuinely Ligurian transition, had grown absurdly suspicious and censorious. Evidently Lent in Italy may be quaint and have its charms, as well as carnival.

XXXI

Vale

There is a pretty view of the old town from the Piazza San Bernardo, where some ancient, gnarled and twisted olive trees stand, affording only a glimpse between their divided branches, which thus frame the distant scene like a rustic casement and make a false window out-of-doors.

When Vincent had reached the Piazza San Bernardo in the course of a morning walk, he stopped to arrange a number of thoughts that had come into his head and had bothered him a little since he had set out from home at an early hour. He stopped to think out these matters, and so to have done with them, in view of the old town, through the illusive casement of olive branches, because he had learned by experience that agreeable suggestions were sure to come to him from the queer, shabby, cocked-hat part of San Remo. It is such a whimsical jumble of buildings; yet peo-

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ple live there happily, laughing away so much of the time they have for living.

First of all, he had to settle a question of expenses. The tradespeople had been over-charging, it seemed; their weekly accounts were much larger than he had expected. He took out his pocketbook to see how he would stand in reference to luxuries after paying for these contemptible necessities, and added up the flimsy Italian bank notes, with their inscriptions "*vale cento lire* (worth one hundred lire)," etc. But in view of that whimsical old town he could not read their denominations as "value hundred lire, fifty lire." No; the word *vale* seemed to become Latin, and to mean *farewell*. So he had to count like this, "Good-by, hundred lire; good-by, fifty!" until the absurdity of the notion that each bank note was ready to go, and said so plainly on its face, changed his humor.

Why, just look at that crazy old town. What can be expected of people who live in such a place? They *have* to laugh, and cheat, and laugh again.

* * *

And then the absurd conduct of the "office boys"—that had to be thought out

also. You see, Gloria and Vincent could not dine the whole battalion at once, so they naturally invited the officers in detachments. What did the guests make of this? Why, the first detachment assumed that they were always to be favored above the rest, and were insulted when the others had been impartially received. "You have other friends now; you don't care for us now," said the first detachment, sulking like children.

Such amiable nonsense!

"Suppose we should give a masquerade," said Vincent to himself, "and ask all the officers at once."

The idea of a masquerade had no sooner presented itself than it was accepted, and Vincent fell to arranging the details of the plan. Villa Mora was small, to be sure, but the musicians could be stationed in the hall; both the drawing-room and the dining-room could be cleared for dancing, to make more space; the garden might be lighted with colored lamps hung from the trees; matting could be laid along the gravel walks, seats put in the arbor, and rustic benches in secluded corners. Yes, evidently the thing was feasible enough.

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But when should this ball be given? They were now in Lent; it would be better to wait until that had passed. On the other hand, the lease of the Villa Mora would expire before long, and this reminded Vincent that he had been meaning to speak with the agent about taking the house for another season. He would go to see the agent immediately.

So Vincent hurried on, passing through the market-place, where Tommasina was bargaining for lettuce and water-cress and radishes. "There is to be a good salad for our luncheon," Vincent thought.

Presently he arrived at the agency; but there he was treated to a surprise which he found in part rather provoking and in part decidedly pleasant.

For when he had stated his intention to the polite agent the latter said: "I was just going to look you up about that very matter. Here is a letter from the owner, saying that she and her husband are coming to live at the villa as soon as your present term is out."

"Her husband?" Vincent repeated.

"Yes; it seems she has married a fellow who has been hanging around here most of

the winter. You must have noticed him. He wears a cloak all the time, and—”

“Looks like Victor Emanuel?” Vincent interrupted.

“That’s the chap.”

Now this polite house-agent was a tremendously tall man, but for an instant after he had imparted the disagreeable news that the villa must be restored to its owner so soon, Vincent disliked every inch of him.

And yet there was still to be considered the other side of the question—the decidedly pleasant side—as Vincent realized a little later.

For twenty years or so Mademoiselle Mora had cherished in her heart one purpose—the purpose to overcome all obstacles separating her from her lover. As she grew older the passionate love which had inspired this purpose cooled; that was inevitable; while the purpose itself, the particular form in which her ambition was cast, became more and more strong, as a mental habit. The natural tendency of her artistic career, with this earnest informing purpose, had been to subdue emotions and cultivate the intellectual part. When, however, she came face to face with that disappointing

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Ninety-Nine and realized at once all his unworthiness, the emotional side of her nature, rendered more potent than usual by the circumstances of the meeting, asserted itself against the shabby old ghost of a lover, and scored a triumph—but only a temporary triumph. The result just announced was really not surprising. Her purpose had finally carried the day, as it was sure to do sooner or later, being the strongest force in a matured character. For years she had been fancying that she wanted this old lover, whereas in truth she just wanted to have her own way, and to dispose of her life as she had planned it. Surely every one rejoices to see a plucky little woman succeed; and this marriage was perhaps the only form of success possible for Mademoiselle Mora—her high note.

* * *

When that good salad of lettuce, watercress, radishes, and olives was put on at luncheon, Vincent turned and turned it over and over in the deep bowl, oftener than was necessary, while inwardly debating the question whether or no it would be wise to communicate this last bit of news. To communicate it would seem like insisting



SAN REMO, FROM THE PIAZZA SAN BERNARDO

that there had been some truth revealed by his false windows, after all. So finally he put it in this way:

"We have perhaps been long enough in San Remo. The place is beginning to lose that delightful novelty which made its charm at first—when it seemed charmingly Italian to be informed by the clerk at the post office that he had no stamps for our letters, but thought he might receive some in the course of the day."

"Oh, there is a letter, out of a clear sky," Gloria was reminded, and sent the maid to bring it.

"Riviera life is now getting too familiar," Vincent continued; "one of us can't even sneeze in the public street now without hearing somebody cry '*Santé!*' "

Perhaps it was Gloria's chance expression "out of a clear sky;" at any rate something prompted Vincent to take the letter which the maid brought and open it in the drawing-room. It was from his London banker, enclosing a cable despatch from Mr. Taswell Langdon at Washington: "*War within a month.*" Langdon had considerably avoided telegraphing directly to the San

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Remo address, because the contents of a telegram could not so easily be kept from Gloria.

And this friendly deception was so thoroughly successful that it was not even necessary for Gloria to know that a messenger was sent down the mule path and into the town with this reply:

"TASWELL LANGDON, ARLINGTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON:

"Offer my services to President and Secretary War.
"VINCENT."

Only a few minutes had passed, at the very beginning of a marvellous Italian afternoon. Gloria was still absorbed in the thoughts which Vincent had suggested, and she spoke to him, when he sat down behind the salad-bowl again, as though there had been no interruption.

"Let's go back," said Gloria.

"To New York?"

"To *him*," said Gloria.

Vincent and Gloria looked at each other across the table. There was really no uncertainty in the mind of either, for, of those two human motives which are incalculably potent—love of offspring and love of country—her nature obeyed one and his nature

VALE

obeyed the other at that moment. But they seemed to be debating the question of their return to America, without a word, merely with the questioning and consenting glances of kind eyes, as had been their custom in the days of reticent courtship.

Yes, but this was more blessed, for now each saw in the other's face the features of their boy at school in America, and of their daughter; and whereas untried love had taught them to conjugate altruistically, imperfectly, "We, You, I," now the present tense of every happy verb began, "He" and "She"—and then came "We," and then "You," and last of all, "I."

This book is a little book of travel, but its conclusion is from the grammar of life.

THE END.

A Note on Bull-Fighting

(Extract From Mr. Langdon's Sevillian Common-place Book)

The formal title of our club is "Circulo de Labradores y Proprietarios," which means "society of cultivators and landed proprietors"; but, far from being an agricultural society (I wish it were an agricultural society, for the enormous fertile plain of the Guadalquivir is sadly in need of improved agricultural methods), it is the aristocratic club, perhaps the most wasteful and elegant in all Andalusia—the principal room being decorated with divans, Moorish arches, and men who talk about young women and bulls. Behind this is a deep narrow room supplied with card-tables, and adjoining it on the same floor is a billiard room and a private hair-dresser's shop. Above, on the second floor, are the reading-room, library, and fencing-room, with various parlors and more card-rooms.

But I need not further describe the building, as I have already said that the membership is aristocratic, and the aristocratic Spaniard is inclined to be cosmopolitan, building his club in the likeness of London and New York clubs.

I only want to tell the story of McLean.

"It was at Cadiz, that this thing happened," said a tall blonde Spanish member of our club. "There was a Scotch-American named McLean, chief engineer of one of the Transatlantic Company's ships,

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present at a bull-fight. I was there myself. I saw it all. Well, this McLean was there with a lot of other engineers—all in drink. Two bulls had been killed when McLean left his friends and walked out into the ring. Taking his stand before the president's box, he called to that officer, in a queer mixture of Spanish and English, 'You permit me to matar bull—to kill toro?' The president understood *matar* and *toro*, and the engineer's meaning was plain; so permission was granted. The professionals (the cuadrilla) left the field clear for him; the bugles sounded; the door of the toril was opened; the bull appeared—the third bull. Then McLean in his shirt sleeves awaited the charge of the bull, caught the black beast by the horns, shook him, turned him, mastered him, without a weapon. So they stood facing each other for a moment—McLean shaking his fist, the bull afraid to come at him again. Then the bull ran away and leaped over a barrier. The man stood alone in that great ring, while ten thousand spectators screamed and shouted with wonder and admiration. He had no more to do, except to salute the president, for his task was finished; but I assure you he was as sober when he went out as he was drunk when he went in."

A tall blonde Spaniard, Felipe Dartiaga by name, told this story at the club this afternoon in Holy Week, and I have translated it as above because it leads straight to a most essential difference between Spaniards and Americans or Englishmen, or Scots, or Irishmen—all three at one in the manly art, and the love of it. The narrator of the story himself wore English clothes, affected English manners, and with his light hair had rather the look of an Englishman. (I may observe parenthetically that blondes are not very rare in the upper classes of Seville—neither are tall

NOTE

people—neither are Anglomaniacs. The “small, dark Spaniard” of conventional literature has some big white-skinned brothers and sisters in real life.)

Of the other gentlemen whom this story drew together in an attentive group around Dartiaga, some wore pointed beards and close-cropped hair in the French style; others were like the narrator. The distinctively Spanish style, is restricted to the common people. Even the capa, or Spanish cloak, is not considered good form. Gentlemen still wrap their faces in it when they go out at night, but for use during the day, in cold weather, the local dandies must have a covert coat and top hat.

So, then, these gentlemen at the club looked more or less like Englishmen or Frenchmen as they stood talking with Spanish violence and Spanish gestures about bulls; but all acknowledged that McLean was inimitable.

I have it from another source that McLean was lost at sea. I can't say he was drowned. That phrase will do for smaller men, but such a splendid fellow must have gone down like a ship.

PRINTED BY R. R. DONNELLEY
AND SONS COMPANY AT THE
LAKESIDE PRESS, CHICAGO, ILL.

MAY 26 1899

VENGEANCE OF THE MARRION WILCOX

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